

J O A N!!!

A

NOVEL.

BY

MATILDA FITZJOHN.

You have no great pretensions to wit or sprightliness of genius.—I grant it.

MARC. ANTONIN.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR HOOKHAM AND CARPENTER
OLD BOND STREET.

1796.

JOHN A. WILSON

NOVEL

MARILYN RITZ JOHN

You have no idea how much I love you
MARILYN RITZ JOHN

YOUR VOLUME

VOL. II

PRINTED FOR THE



JOAN!!!

CHAP. I.

THE distress of Elizabeth, whom, till the loss of her governess, the shaft of sorrow had never immediately reached, now hardly admitted of exaggeration. Happily for her, she did not at the moment see it in its extent: she was insensible of all loss, excepting that of her father: she was too much stunned to recollect that it involved in it the privation of every dependence of life; that it took from her her home, her security, nay, perhaps her daily food and necessary raiment. She could have no hopes from Lady Jemima

VOL. II.

B

or

or her sisters, and beyond them there was no one to whom she dared to look; for though she knew that Sir Clifford Byram was alive, she knew also that Mr. Byram had taken the utmost pains to conceal her from him; and Lady Jemima and the young ladies had not unfrequently, in their envious disposition to mortify her, told her plainly that she was indebted for the great indulgences she enjoyed, solely to Sir Clifford's ignorance, that there was such a person as herself. Far indeed was this from the fact; for Sir Clifford, though his sense of honor prompted him to support his son in all the consequences of a match he had driven him into, so heartily detested the subsequent insolence, caprice and folly of his daughter-in-law and her progeny, that had he heard of Joanna or Elizabeth, her ladyship would have stood but a sorry chance of preference. But of this the helpless orphan was ignorant; or she might have found in the corrected judgment

ment and sincere repentance of Sir Clifford, a second father, and an affluent provision.

If Lady Jemima was not to be moved by the trifling consideration of her husband's dangerous illness, she was, however, not insensible to the necessity of her taking a journey into the north on his death, that she might secure whatever was valuable. Byram had nothing that could be called his own ; he, therefore, made no will ; but left the survivors to stem the torrent of his debts by the small supplies of his current income. The separate provision settled on Lady Jemima, at her marriage, though her ladyship spent the interest, he supposed untouched in the principal ; and to that he trusted for a provision for them, till the decease of his father, when he did not doubt, if Sir Clifford did not leave them the whole of his property, that still they would be munificently fortunèd.

Here, however, he was mistaken. Lady Jemima had played deep; and ill fortune pursuing her through several weeks, she had been forced to have recourse to her trustees whom she found the way of cajoling and sold out her separate stock, making, it must be confessed, at the time of annihilating this fund, a resolution to replace it at the first opportunity, which, as she played generally with success, and was increasing in experience, she did not at all doubt she might easily do; but unfortunately thousands are much sooner squandered than accumulated; and however paltry a large sum appeared in her eyes, while she had it in possession, and sighed for some pleasure it was to purchase, yet it was a task much too formidable for her levity even to *begin* a plan of œconomy. She found she could go on without the money: it was gone; and what signified thinking about it?

But when, on hearing that she was a widow, she was forced to an investigation,
and

and found that there were not the means she expected of gratifying her projected scheme of mourning profusion : when she suspected that it was not so much a question, whether she should send her coach to be put in mourning, or wait the building of another, as whether she should have *any* or *none*, she was startled. She thought of sending immediately to Sir Clifford Byram ; but he was in England, where he had for some years remained, that he might not see the fruits of his own culpable zeal ; and Lady Jemima, though seldom inclined to despond, where her own powers were her reliance, felt that she must lower her haughty tones most painfully before her wants would plead with Sir Clifford.

To the house in the north, therefore, she bent her way, as the best method of avoiding humiliating observation, and of securing what might be there. Unwilling
to

to admit vexatious truths into her mind, she, on the journey, persuaded herself that she should find hoards of wealth in the dismal old mansion; and calling to her recollection the many stories of hidden treasure, annexed to antique family residences, she would gladly have dilapidated the house for the chance of its contents, could she have forgotten that as it was not her husband's property, she might embroil herself.

Her two daughters occupied a more than usual share of her thoughts just at this time. She had left them in Dublin, therefore had no personal charge of them: she loved them not, because they did not gratify her vanity, she consequently was not uneasy for their fates; but she recollected them as impediments to a plan which might at once have recompensed her for the loss of Byram, his fortune, and his father's favor.

This

This was no other than that of a second marriage, projected in her fertile imagination, before she had put on her weeds for her former partner. Her glass, her woman, and her train of idolaters, had told her, and had sworn, that if her beauty was not proof against the hand of time, it was still reparable to a degree of perfection unrivalled. So many of the first men of fashion in Hibernia, and in Britain, had breathed the soft accents of love, and cursed the Fates which had pre-disposed of her hand, that she doubted not an innumerable host would be in extasies at her emancipation, and croud to offer her riches and honor. Like Alnaschar the glass merchant, she set her fancy in a ferment, and practised all the insolence the supposed submission of others might give occasion to. She had settled the nicest points of her new establishment to her satisfaction ; and nothing gave her uneasiness but the delay she must submit to, which, unless she found the fancied treasure

sure in the old house might perhaps compel her to descend to persuasion of Sir Clifford Byram. Her certainty of finding hoards, increased as she ruminated: the country all around *looked* quite as if money had been hid in the neighbourhood: the first glance she had of the house struck her, as it never had done before, with the idea of miserly saving. It was impossible that her trifling expences, money which went only a few pounds at a time, should have consumed such an income as Mr. Byram's. It was very odd she should have this sort of prediction which she had never felt before in her mind, unless there was something in it: she was sure money would be found, if it were but diligently sought for.

Thus intoxicated with extravagant ideas, which had neither foundation nor support, she reached the mansion, and entered it without the smallest animadversion on the fragile possessions of the world, or the
 4 awfully

awfully unforeseen disasters which separate the strongest ties of nature. She had never for a moment felt for Byram the common affection which will, in spite of all opposition, grow up between two persons engaged in one interest, and dependent on one fate. It was his expected wealth that had first attracted her ; it was his possessing superior power to gratify her darling follies that attached her to him ; and now that he was dead, she seemed to think it the wiser part to look forward. On entering the house, she sent an abrupt message to Elizabeth desiring a delivery of whatever keys &c. she might have in her possession. The sorrowing girl had just shut herself up in a room adjoining that where the corpse had been prepared for interment, and was not at all aware of her ladyship's arrival ; but instantly recollecting what was due to Lady Jemima Byram, she rose to attend her.

She had less fear than was usual on occasions so tremendous as those which car-

ried her into the presence of this great
 ady ; for grief she considered as a temper of
 mind subduing all distinctions. She hoped
 the evidences of her sorrow would not
 give additional pain to her father's wi-
 dow : she strove to be steady, that she
 might not distress her ;—it appeared to
 her a hard task to meet one who must feel
 agonies of distress so nearly equal to her
 own ; and she stood before her ladyship in
 mute distress, before she could at all frame
 her mind to the emergency. She was
 sunk too deeply into herself to remark
 that neither the haste of her journey, nor
 the event which had caused it, had in the
 smallest particular affected Lady Jemima's
 external scrupulosity. She was rouged as
 high as for a midnight ball ; she had re-
 jected no part of her usual ornaments as
 warring with the state of her mind ; for
 her mind had never been at hostilities
 with folly or impertinence ; nor would
 she perhaps have been made aware, by
 the longest lecture, that she was unfeeling
 or absurd ; but the first sight of Elizabeth
 was

was a contrasting comment and a tacit reproof on her ill-placed tawdriness: for Elizabeth, untaught by fashion, and destitute of every monitor but a correct unviolated judgment, had by choice put on mourning as soon as she began to mourn; and though she had nothing but the remnant of that she had worn for her governess, it had on her all the effect of the deepest weeds. Her dress was black: her hair, which to please Mr. Byram was always, as nature designed it, loose and flowing, added by its glossy brown to the effect of her dress. Round her neck, by a black ribbon, hung a picture of her father which he had a short time before given her, and which now it was her consolation to contemplate; her figure, which resembled the lily bowed by too impetuous a shower, was always elegant, but now peculiarly interesting, and her countenance, which depended not on smiles or the glow of health and hilarity for its uncommon beauty, expressed all the tenderness and dignity of sorrow founded in reason.

Lady

Lady Jemima, who had not seen her for several years, and who having seldom recollected her, and never enquired after her, had not corrected her ideas in proportion to the lapse of time, first stared, it must be owned, even though she could not own it to herself, with *admiration*. The whole circle of her acquaintance, though it included whatever the world applauds in the person or the manners, never had presented, nor could it present to her a form so lovely, a countenance so nearly divine as that she now beheld. The malignity of her nature was deserting its seat in her bosom; and in another moment love must have filled its place; but she instantly recalled her more familiar companion; and she eased the pain she felt, by giving vent to her envy in the opprobrious remark, "Good God! child, what a height you are grown to! why you will be a monster!" Then taking her arm roughly, and turning her about, she examined her figure, uttering aloud a suspicion that she was or would be
crooked,

crooked, and comforting her evil genius by observing, that she might be every thing charming in her own eyes; but that she was not at all fashionable. Tears, not of disappointed vanity, but of genuine grief, rendered more pungent by barbarity, burst from the miserable girl's eyes. Her ladyship chose to misunderstand them: in a rough voice she muttered, "Well, if you cannot bear to be told a plain truth, I can't help it;" and in a shriller and more imperious tone, "Give me up all the keys—I am mistress of the house now—it is time I should be, I perceive." Elizabeth obeyed in silence, and hastened out of the room that she might offend no more.

It was not in human nature now to forbear turning her thoughts upon herself and her future fate: she could hope for nothing, if Lady Jemima could be thus cruel with the hand of misfortune still chill upon her. She retired to the room where her governess was sitting; and being obliged
to

to account for her fresh distress by saying Lady Jemima had given her a very different reception from that she had expected, she found another opportunity of increasing her knowledge of the world; for her prudent governess seemed disposed to take part with the aggressor, and justified her treatment of her pupil by alledging her ladyship's rank, and reminding her *chere mademoiselle* that she was but a bastard, and therefore had no rights.

The hearts of all seemed hardened; and Elizabeth retreated to her inner chamber, that she might at least indulge in the privacy of woe. In passing through that where Mr. Byram's body lay, and which the frequency of her visits rendered as little dreary to her as any other room of the house, she could not forbear stopping at the coffin with the sad reflection, that when the lifeless corpse should be removed for burial, every vestige of protection for her vanished. She felt in all its force,
and

and with every addition of personal misery, that jealous unwillingness all who have lost a friend and retain a heart must feel when the earth is about to close over the once-lov'd object of their sight. The sound of feet drove her away: she heard, during the afternoon, uninterrupted by any concern for her, all that bustle and those noises which want no interpreter to the keen conception of grief. After some hours solitude, her governess so far got over her *cadaverous* sensibilities, and a small fear, not proper to be confessed, that Mr. Byram might be frolicksome in his winding sheet, as to pay the young lady a visit, with the tender and reasonable requests, *Je vous prie, Mademoiselle, mangez un peu*; and *De grace, Madame, consolez-vous*; aiding her energy by the novel arguments *car c'est une folie pleurer les novels*. Elizabeth's sorrows rose superior to such trash of argument: she asked only the short question, "Do you remember losing *your* father, madam?" and then requested she might be left alone. If
her

her comforter had before any regards of compassion or humanity in her breast, the reproachful query annihilated them; and she departed in disdain, determined that as Lady Jemima *must* be rich, and Miss Elizabeth *might* be poor, and as she herself was, against her will, very much of the latter description, she would pay her court to the widow rather than to the orphan.

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

ELIZABETH having requested, from a servant, a little food to sustain sinking nature, and feeling, even depressed as she was, a spirit too great to risque any more of Lady Jemima's eloquence, remained a voluntary prisoner for the night.

She lay down on the bed without undressing, and about two in the morning, her melancholy vigils were disturbed by the sound of footsteps in the adjoining apartment : the door of her room was tried, but being fastened within, was only shaken ; she next heard an odd kind of howling noise ; but in about half an hour all was still. Neither education, prejudice, nor conscience having rendered her timid, she was determined not to suffer an uninvestigated dread to alarm her : she therefore rose, took the light that stood in her chamber, and went into the next, where she at first saw nothing more than she was accustomed

tomed to; but in a few moments she perceived the feathers on the coffin shake, and the corners of the pall swing: she enquired, in a trembling voice, who was there; no answer was returned: she felt a violent wind rush towards her face; and the candle in her hand was blown out. Her fortitude was not equal to any farther experiment, and chill and palpitating, she found her way to the bed. Soon after the heavy turret clock had struck four, she heard deep sounding footsteps stalk across the mourning chamber: the door was shut without violence, and the steps died away. She rose as soon as light appeared, and again went into the next room, but all was as it had been; and she wished to persuade herself that she had slept and dreamt.

Lady Jemima had passed the night with equal watchfulness, but greater activity. She had been ransacking every probable and improbable place in the house, for a will, and the hidden treasure she expected;

but

but she had found neither. Had Elizabeth known how her ladyship had been employed, her wonder and her fears respecting what she had heard and seen, would have been done away; but she would have been deceived: it was not Lady Jemima, or any one of her agents, who had occasioned what disturbed her in the mourning chamber, nor could any one of whom she enquired give her any satisfaction other than the supposition that the chamber was haunted.

That she might sink in her usual melancholy this new oppression of her spirits, which the evidence of her senses would not suffer her to resolve into imagination, she strolled alone into the garden, and was deeply meditating on the question, "Who now is to support me through life?" when she found she had strayed farther than she had intended, and was entering a very woody grove adjoining the garden, through which there was no path. The fear of losing herself made her
turn

turn hastily back, and at the moment, she saw leap down from a tall tree about ten yards from her, a man: he seemed as if he had lain in wait for her, and was preparing to pursue her; but he had lamed himself with his fall; and she had time to get before him. Lame as he was, he however made such speed after her, as obliged her to run with all her power, and convinced her that he had some ill intention in the chase. She regained the house in safety, and turning round, saw that he had desisted from his pursuit. She mentioned her alarm to a maid-servant she met, and desired the garden might be searched: but the girl resolved it into the house's being haunted, and was certain no one of the servants would be persuaded to go in quest of the apparition.

Elizabeth went to her usual breakfast room, where she found her governess. She told her how she had been disturbed in the night, and what she had seen in the mourning chamber and the garden; and intimating

timating that she feared some ill-designing persons had got into the house and grounds, she requested her to share her bed the following night. Madame seemed at a loss to excuse herself from doing what it was evident she did not chuse to do; but the subject was forgotten in Lady Jemima's sending for Miss Elizabeth.

She was obeyed without delay, but not without reluctance; and whatever little hope might have been excited by her expressing a wish for a second interview, none at all soothing to an aching heart remained after she began to speak. Without condescending to those common regards of humanity, which would have excused Elizabeth from appearing like a criminal before her, she questioned her as to what sums of money she had received from Mr. Byram. In the situation he kept his daughter in, money could have purchased her no gratification; for she had never been suffered to associate with those who were styled

style the neighbourhood: she was supplied with whatever she wanted without the medium of purchase, and all her expences were defrayed by Mr. Byram. Excepting therefore for her little charities, money was useless to her; and Lady Jemima looked at once pleased and disappointed, when told that Elizabeth never had been mistress of twenty pounds.

She next interrogated her as to the means of life she designed to pursue, giving her to understand plainly that her father had left nothing, that his debts were large, and that she must no longer continue to enhance expences which, as far as was possible, were to be immediately reduced. Elizabeth could not comprehend the whole of the cruelty projected against her: with a voice that would have softened obduracy itself, she requested to know how it was her ladyship's pleasure to dispose of her. "Nay, child," returned Byram's widow, "I do not mean to *dispose* of you, I only mean to

get

get rid of you. I ask you what you intend to do with yourself?"

"And can you, replied Elizabeth, ask such a question of a poor helpless unfriended being, who has been kept here from her birth, in peace and happiness I confess, but in ignorance of every thing hard fortune teaches? How am I to dispose of myself? Where am I to seek a livelihood? What have I seen of the world? I know no more than this house, and the country ten miles round it—excepting visiting a few of the peasants' cabins, I never was in any other than this, nor did I wish it while my father lived. I have no claims on you madam: my father always taught me my dependence and your goodness in noticing me; but am I then to be abandoned? Will you turn me out and leave me to perish? For heaven's sake have pity for me, though I am unworthy of your love, place me in any station where I can get a living, and I will be no longer a burthen to you---perhaps I could teach what I have been taught myself

myself---I have no right to be proud---I will be industrious."

"Go away, I will fend for you again," was the only answer Lady Jemima could trust herself to make; for a sentiment of compassion rose and impeded utterance. It was however soon overcome in the pursuit of her favourite idea of hidden treasure. This, and an examination of some tenants she hoped to have found in arrear; the orders she had to give for the morrow, which was to be the day of interment, and a variety of cares for herself, occupied her; and the painful necessity she found herself under of writing in supplicating terms to Sir Clifford Byram who she knew hated her, so disturbed the *harmony* of her temper, that towards evening, she felt fitly disposed to entertain herself again with Elizabeth, who had taken refuge from the increased unpleasantness of her governess, in the mourning chamber, where nothing had again occurred to terrify her.

Her

Her ladyship was not perfectly certain that her application to Sir Clifford might not be followed by a visit of investigation from him ; her letter she was confident would soften him : she had forborne all mention of Elizabeth, not indeed in compliance with Byram's uniform wish that he might never know of his *imprudence* ; but in conformity to the dictates of her own envy and selfishness. She had not vanity to suppose that either herself or her daughters could entirely exclude their humble relative from notice, were she once brought forward : she feared Sir Clifford's bounty might be excited with his compassion, and her own share of it thereby lessened : she feared still more the being compelled to admit a rival under her protection. She was therefore resolved to dismiss her as soon as possible, and in a way that should secure her against any farther trouble, when her fine plans of aggrandisement and splendor should be realised.

Unknown to her she was taking so much pains to injure, she had, in the course of the day, sounded her governess, and found her so entirely devoted to her service, that no opposition was to be dreaded on her part. The hope of being continued in some capacity, however humble, that could entitle her to boast herself as the dependent of a lady of quality, made Madame as supple as could be wished. She saw in an instant, either by dint of her own sagacity, or Lady Jemima's perspicuity of expression, how *terriblement incommode* it must be to have *une jolie fille* to take care of, who might perhaps *en peu de tems* be more taken notice of than the young ladies her sisters, who must marry or be dependent.

Having again summoned Elizabeth to appear, she, in the forms of cross-examination, questioned her as to Mr. Byram's expences while at Balla-Craig, and racked every fibre of her affectionate heart, by reproachful comments on profusion, which
 she

she could neither specify nor prove. She then desired to see *her apartment*.

With the resignation of a culprit giving up property to legal inquisition, Elizabeth anticipated Lady Jemima's curiosity, which almost suspended her malevolence, when she saw a small room, far from being one of the best in the house, very moderately furnished, but decorated in a style beyond all expence; for it was the beloved haunt of genius, industry, and taste. Nothing was wanting that could assist talents; but there was no display of ostentatious sedulity. She had a good musical instrument, a neat apparatus for painting, and another for work, in which was a nearly finished piece of embroidery, so beautiful, that her ladyship stopped to ask whence it was copied. "It is my own design madam," replied Elizabeth:--"Well! but," interrupted Lady Jemima, "here seems a great deal of it, and all on crape! Common people should not undertake such expensiveworks;

they come to a great deal of money. Besides, child, when did you expect to wear it? it's for a dress I suppose--- what were you to be introduced?" "I intended it, madam," said the poor girl hesitatingly, "for a dress for you, if you would have done me the honor to wear it."---"O, aye! finish it, child, by all means---I am sure it will be very handsome, and it will be just ready in six months, for I do not intend to mourn longer." Elizabeth curtsied, and hoped she was gaining ground.

Her books, which were well chosen, but not of an expensive appearance, did not long detain the inquisitive lady. A myops in her visual organs and in her intellects, she ran her nose against a few, and muttering *Zimmermann*, *Genlis*, *Tasso*, *Davila*, *Blair*, she passed on, and desired next to see her wardrobe. With this indelicate request Elizabeth immediately complied, and leading the way to another small room, where were two neat beds, she
opened

opened a closet which contained a riding dress, two or three ordinary gowns of printed calico, and about as many muslin, all calculated for a growing girl, whose appearance was intended to be no more than decent. In this article, and in all others where expence depended on choice, the provision for Elizabeth had been regulated by the good sense of her former governess, who foreseeing that her pupil's situation might depend on the caprice of a fine lady, and penetrating her character sufficiently to perceive that while she professed to love and admire, she hated and envied, wished in every thing to avoid giving offence, and above all, to keep Elizabeth's mind in a perfect state of sober moderation.

Here then was nothing to censure; but it was difficult for her ladyship to believe she had seen all. She was sure the Miss Byrams must have wardrobes three times as large---but then to be sure there was a difference.

What

What she had scrutinized had nearly disarmed her of her ill humour; and she could not leave the room without feeling the inferiority of her own indocile offspring, the eldest of whom could scarcely write her name legibly, and had plodded in sullen stupor over the first rudiments of her own language, while the younger curled her hair out of the French dialogues: it might there aptly have been observed that there was *to be sure a difference*.

Lady Jemima stiffly curtsying, and too much unhinged even to scold, retreated to her busy occupations, and left Elizabeth to conjecture what could be the reason of this visit of inspection. Her governess solved all the difficulty by observing that her ladyship had certainly *raison* for all she did; for she was a very sensible lady.

In the various modifications of mental distress which Elizabeth had undergone, and little accustomed as she was to direct for herself, she had not troubled her brains

to enquire how she was to be supplied with mourning for her father; but this afternoon, seeing preparations for that of others in hand, she mentioned it to her governess, who seemed not prepared with an answer, but advised her to speak to Lady Jemima on the subject. Fearing she might be thought negligent or helpless, if she remained silent, she resolved to do so, and sent a respectful request to her ladyship for an audience. Whether Lady Jemima was vexed at the interruption, or had only recovered the asperity of her temper, may be doubted; but Elizabeth found her less tractable than ever. To a question that ought neither to have surprised nor offended her, she answered in terms of unlimited reproach, and took the opportunity her roused passion afforded her to reveal her intentions. She accused Elizabeth of having, with a view to drive her and her servants from the house, spread a report that it was haunted: she called her the object of all Mr. Byram's profusion and folly: she rated her into tears; and

and then told her, she would allow her three days to provide herself with a situation; for she meant herself to return then to Dublin, and should choose to see the house cleared before she went.

Elizabeth supported herself against the door-case while she heard this cruel sentence; and in silence turning one eloquent look of misery on her capricious persecutor, would have left the room; but Lady Jemima's wish to be cruel was greater than her power; she called her back; and in a softened tone, assured her it was far from her intention to distress her---she must herself see the necessity of getting her living by her own industry, as she had nothing else to depend on: for her part, she wished she could do any thing for her; but really Mr. Byram had been so imprudent, and had left her in such distress, it was out of her power to be generous. Unless his father, who had lately treated her very coolly, should be disposed

to

to do something for her daughters, they had no better provision than Elizabeth herself, which was very hard, as *they* were *legitimate* children. She advised her to be comforted, and to go to her own apartment. In the latter injunction, she was obeyed; but where were the means for obeying the former to be sought?

CHAP. III.

NIGHT came, and Elizabeth, however impressed by the appearance in the mourning chamber, would not return to her usual sleeping room, although her governess would have declined, on frivolous pretences, complying with her request, that she would sleep with her : at last, her pride getting the better of her fears, madame consented, and at an early hour, she and her *élève* retired together : she who had heard and seen all that had occasioned the alarm not half so much terrified as she who had only heard the report of it. Elizabeth's mind was too full to allow her to sleep, and rumination on her situation, rendered her as little disposed to conjure up fears ; but a little after midnight, she again heard so distinctly some one walking in the next room, that she could not persuade herself it was ideal. Again her door was rattled ; and she

she heard some one in a deep voice call her by her name. Madame could sham sleep no longer: Elizabeth, determined to find out what it was, got up and dressed herself, and all this time heard the walking continued. Her governess had risen with her, under pretence of sharing her investigation; but it was to prepare for flight; for when Elizabeth had lighted a candle, and was unlocking the chamber door, she slid out at an opposite one which led to a back stair-case. Her young lady had now opened the door, and was stepping forward, when she saw a tall stout man, who seemed preparing to enter the room. She faintly screamed, and was sinking, when he, dropping on his knees, and begging her in the most genuine Irish brogue, *ten thousand millions* of pardons, assured her he had only *frightened her for her own happiness*, that he had taken a great deal of pains to terrify her, in hopes of being able to speak to her, for that he had something to say in private, which, as it was a great secret, he wished nobody to hear:

bear: "I came here," said Teague, "last night, to *spake* to your ladyship, but I believe I had got a little in my head *more than my brains*; for *saeing* my poor dear master, I went to cry over him a bit; and I went to *slape* by the coffin, and this morning I saw you come into the garden; so I gets up a *trae* to *sae* which way you took, and I jumped down I *belave* in too great a hurry; for I got lamed, and you run away."

"Well, but for Heaven's sake, who are you, and what is your business?" interrupted his trembling hearer. "I am," replied the man---"no, *I am not*; but *I was*, servant to my master as long as he lived---no till he went away from *dear* Dublin, *dear* soul, and I nursed him when he was very ill, before he came away from his own home; and he told me he had something upon his mind; and I told him, Why dear sir don't you *spake* it? Tell my lady, or write to your father, and I dare say you will be better, or if that won't do, there is Father O'Leary, that

that I always trusts with my little matters, and he always does me good ; and I dare say he would take care of yours.--- No no, Dennis, says my master, Father O'Leary can do me no good---and I believe he said his wife, my lady here, could do him no good; but that indeed is not much to be wondered at, for I believe *she never did any good but mischief*; and as for his father, he said he could not tell him what ailed him, without *letting him know it*; and that he had sworn never to do---and so at last, after a great long deal about it, he trusts poor honest Dennis Geohegan, and he tells me that all his concern was about you; and he says, Ah Dennis, that *fwate crature* in the north, that I call my *naitral* daughter, is no more my *naitral* daughter than she is yours. But then says I, dear master, whose *naitral* daughter may she be? Nobody's, says my master; but, says he, what grieves me the most is, that *as I have nothing to give her I can give her nothing*. Why no sir, says I; but if she is not your *naitral* child, why

should you grieve about other folk's children? O Dennis! says my master, *you do not understand me, because you do not know my meaning.* And then, madam, my lady popt in, and I popt out; and my master afterwards seemed sorry for what he had told me, *because then I knew it*; but the devil fetch me if I should have told any body a word of it."

"Well, but what is your particular business with me?" said Elizabeth, agonised with suspense and doubt.---"Do you mean only to tell me what I cannot credit, that I am not Mr. Byram's daughter?"

"No no, my dear young lady," replied Dennis with earnest affection---"what I wanted, is *to make my dear master happy now he is dead.* He used, dear soul, to trust me with all his money; and sometimes there was such plenty about his house, that one might help one's-self, and nobody be the worse; and so then, I used to cheat my master for his own sake, and lay by a little
to

to help him when cash run low, as indeed it often did latterly, and so I had about thirteen hundred pounds in my hands of my master's when I heard he was dead, and so when my lady asked for money, I told her there was none; for I was determined to save it for you, as my master would have done his dear self---and here it is, said honest Dennis, putting into his young lady's hand a packet of notes, and a canvas bag,---take them; and God and St. Patrick bless you; for you are a *fwate* lady."

"Well, but these are not mine, good Dennis," said Elizabeth: "I have no right to them. "Yes yes, you have," said he: "I must not not stay longer, for *I will be found to be lost, and then I will be missed.*" And away he tript, leaving Elizabeth in amazement to go to bed.

The mystery of the preceding night was now unveiled, but a new one succeeded to it---why should Mr. Byram deny her
to

to be his daughter, when his words his actions, and the whole of his conduct, had so much more forcibly than any acknowledgement recognised her as such? She could no way solve this; but it was still more difficult to her to admit an idea that so militated against her feelings, and cut her off, as it were, from all connexion with society. Even in her person she thought she bore evident contradictions of this supposition: she was so like Mr. Eyrham, that that circumstance of itself had been supposed by her governess, a reason with him for confining her to his house in the country.

From this perplexing subject which almost distracted her by its obscurity and intricacy, she turned her thoughts to Dennis's present, which her natural integrity taught her she could not conscientiously retain, especially if a doubt could be entertained of her consanguinity. Beside, she knew Lady Jemima to be straitened for

for money---was it generous to keep that which she did not claim, only because she did not know it existed?---But, thought Elizabeth, I may make Lady Jemima my friend, at the same time that I do an act of integrity---I will carry her the money in the morning; and perhaps she will be pleased with me---Yet what right have I to make a merit of giving up what is not my own? and what will be the consequence to poor Dennis? He will be blamed as dishonest. She now resolved to return the money to him with an injunction to deliver it to Lady Jemima. It was daylight when she had settled this point; and she rose to execute what she had planned.

Madame who had returned to her bed no more, was eager to meet her in the morning, to explain away her cowardly flight, and to enquire how the affair of the apparition had turned out. Believing most religiously in her own mind that it was Mr. Byram's ghost; and knowing that La-
dy

dy Jemima had vented her displeasure heavily against all those who entertained an idea that the house was haunted, she had crept in silence to her own bed, and confined her fears to her own bosom. She was too much humbled by the sense of her own behaviour at the moment of danger, to be very troublesome to her young lady, who answered her that it was a servant busied in the mourning chamber, and that she had herself conversed with him, before she went to bed again. She then enquired for Dennis, and insisted on his restoring the notes and money to Lady Jemima: the poor fellow with tears, and on his knees, besought her to keep them; and nothing would have prevailed on him but her urging the certainty of her making Lady Jemima suspect his integrity, should she, as she must, tell her how she had been wronged. "I believe," said Dennis "a man has no right to give up his character for honesty, *unless he is a rogue*, and then he may do as he pleases. Well, my dear lady,

lady, I will go to my lady with the money, if you will go too ; for my lady has a very long head, and I have but a very short one, and she is so apt to fancy I say what I never spoke, that I always like some one to be by *when we are alone together*, because their memory perhaps may help mine *when the thing is forgot.* "Well," replied Elizabeth, "I will be ready to go with you ; but it must not be till to-morrow ; for to-day my dear father---Mr. Byram I mean---is to be buried---I must go and take a last farewell of him ; and then all my hopes in this world are at an end." "O, never despair, swate young lady," said Dennis, "such a swate crature as you must always do well in the world." She turned away to hide the gushing tears ; and retiring to the mourning chamber, remained there in deep affliction, which the idea of not being Mr. Byram's daughter seemed rather to increase than to abate, till the unfeeling crew of hireling mourners came to remove the body. Then, with no external expressions
of

of sorrow, but a deep sigh that seemed almost to wing her soul to heaven, she quitted the room, and having now no longer the beloved remains to guard---no longer being able to cheat herself with the delusion that she was still near her father, she retired, miserable indeed, to her own apartment, from whence she watched the funeral procession to the church; and listening to the tolling of the bell, guessed that now the body was consigned to the ground, and now the fast-falling earth had closed upon it, and cut off all connexion with the world and its sorrows!

No one seemed to think the fatherless girl needed support or consolation at this trying moment. They either forgot her, or perhaps they judged that the illegitimacy of her birth was a fortification to her nerves. Her governess however, before the bell had ceased to toll, entered, and excused her absence by alledging the necessity she was under *de servir madame qui*

se portoit très mal; but who was already so well recovered as to desire to see Miss Elizabeth immediately---“Beg her ladyship to excuse me for a quarter of an hour,” said her young lady; “and I will attend her.”---The request was civilly complied with; and having endeavoured, as much as possible, to compose her features, she went, in a state of mind that rendered her almost insensible to any fear of farther cruelty.

Byrnie's dubious daughter was too deeply interested in grief to be caught by novel politeness, or dazzled by unexpected demonstrations. In tears not to be restrained.

CHAP.

CHAP. IV.

THE widow's countenance bore no trace of the indisposition madame had depicted, and she received Elizabeth with a degree of urbanity amounting almost to friendly cordiality. She not only requested her to be seated; but she placed a chair for her; and first apologizing for the delay in preparing her mourning, she told her that she deferred giving orders for her own till she returned to Dublin, as in articles of fashion she always chose to be herself the guide, and that if it was agreeable to her she would, at the same time, bespeak what was fit for her.

Byram's dubious daughter was too deeply immersed in grief to be caught by novel politeness, or dazzled by unexpected condescensions. In tears not to be restrained, she

she answered, "O madam! take no care for me---give me something to wear that shall shew not how *it is fit* I should mourn; but how *I do* mourn; for surely no one ever had cause to mourn like me."

"Nay, but be pacified, my dear," said her ladyship--"think what *my* situation is, and compare your own with it, and you will find me much more an object of pity: think what it is to be left here with a load of debts, and to be forced to supplicate a cross tyrannical old man, who I know hates me, for the payment of them: to have a brother, who I am sure would never stir a finger to assist me; to have two children, brought up with great expectations, and now left without a penny, but what they must be beholden to their covetous grandfather for---and then think of yourself: you can never have had any expectations; for illegitimate children can claim nothing, you know."

"O

"O, madam!" interrupted the upbraided mourner: "I pretend to no right, but that of grieving for the best of friends. It would be presumption in me to call Mr. Byram by any other name. For I am told I am not in reality what I have been brought up to think myself."

"And who had the insolence to tell you this?" asked Lady Jemima, in a tone of startled anger---"Who told you that you were not Mr. Byram's natural daughter?---How came you to hear it?" "I was told," returned Elizabeth "that he himself disclaimed me---he said I was not his child, and where, oh where am I now to look for parents?"

"O very well, very well," interposed her ladyship, in a vastly softened tone, and with the kindest looks; "now I understand you, my dear; I thought you had meant to say---but it does not signify. what I thought

thought---I was talking about your mourning; but I forgot what I was going to speak about---O now I recollect it---I have just had Dennis with me, that stupid ignorant fellow, that Mr. Byram trusted as if he had been his steward. He says that he had concealed thirteen hundred pounds, under an idea that Mr. Byram wished you to have it; but that you, on his offering it to you, generously refused it---it was very right to do so, my dear, for it certainly was not yours---and I think myself obliged to you. You shall find your account in it, I assure you. But do not afflict yourself any longer: the funeral is over now; and we must turn our thoughts to the living. I see I can do no good here; so I mean to set out for Dublin to-morrow; and if it is agreeable to you, you shall go with me and remain at my house till I have secured some proper situation for you. I have written to a friend of mine, who I think wants such a young person as yourself: she resides

in England, and till I have her answer, you are welcome to stay with me and the Miss Byrams."

To a friendless creature like Elizabeth, kindness, under any modification, seemed a blessing; and there was in Lady Jemima's last words either a real or an assumed benevolence, that warmed the chill heart of her unhappy dependent, whose pride took no alarm at the intimation that she was to descend from a fostered situation, to one where the anxieties, if not the misfortunes of the world, must reach her. Lady Jemima seemed kind; and Elizabeth felt grateful.

In leaving the parlour, she met Dennis, who came to excuse his having anticipated the disclosure of her generosity. He had done it from a wrong-headed idea that he could, when Elizabeth was absent, give her ladyship some hints which might induce

her to give up at least a part of the money. He therefore spoke warmly of Mr. Byram's regard for the young lady, and the duty of such good wives as her ladyship to fulfil their deceased husband's wishes, neither of which arguments would have any good influence where thirteen hundred pounds and greediness were concerned: and as he, with the true inconsistency of his country, repeated with equal force the misunderstood declaration of his master, that Elizabeth was not his natural child, he might have afforded Lady Jemima as good a pretence as she could have wished, for deserting one who could then claim no obligation on the family; but the buzzing voice of fame had many years ago, and even before she became Byram's wife, whispered to her the report of his private marriage, which, as it did not suit her inclination to believe it, she opposed with incredulity proportioned to the increasing strength of the rumor. She therefore dared to take no advantage of Dennis's mistake,

D 2

but

but resolved, by any means that might offer, to get rid of this formidable enemy.

But what Dennis had hinted respecting the no-relation existing between Byram and his supposed daughter, however inclined her ladyship was to understand his idea of the matter, as she might safely have done, and as it was her interest it should be understood, gave her at the first moment of reflection, the most serious alarm; for she could not persuade herself that her husband might not in his weaker moments have disclosed more to some one, if not to Dennis; and she almost repented having projected the removing her to Dublin, where she might meet some advocate or champion; yet to get rid of her, in the north, where she could not but be sensible she was as much an object of attention as herself, and far more beloved, appeared so impossible, that she was forced to appear better principled than she was, by adhering to a promise she could not conveniently break.

To

To prevent any opposition or suspicion on the part of Elizabeth, she thought it prudent to be civil, and was affectionate to her: she therefore invited her to spend the remainder of the day with her, and endeavoured to amuse the melancholy of her mind, by the ill-suited gaiety of her own. The young woman was not destitute of curiosity, nor had she always been so satisfied with the seclusion she lived in, as not sometimes to wish for a sight of the gayer world; but at this time all hope of the future was absorbed in the sense of what she had lost in her father; and something so like terror palpitated in her bosom whenever she thought of quitting the country, that she half wished Lady Jemima had been less kind to her, or kind in a way that would better have accorded with her feelings.

The shortness of the time not allowing her much preparation, it was agreed that her instrument, and all the implements of her occupations,

occupations, should be sent to Dublin after her. What was to become of her governess she dared not enquire ; but she was hurt the next morning, when her fate was decided by Lady Jemima's dismissing her with the servants. It was indeed a fit reward for Madame's duplicity ; and the voluminous invective with which she received her manumission, at once justified it, and lessened her pupil's sympathetic pity.

The hour of departure at length arrived ; and Elizabeth's first consciousness of her affection to the house she was quitting, then smote on her heart. With what indifference do we seem to ourselves to have regarded that, which at the moment of separation it is agony to relinquish ! Every thing that Elizabeth looked on, appeared to her in a new and remarkable form ; and by the regret it excited, it seemed to speak the language of reproach for her abandoning the scenes of her youth.

She

She was forced to break away from these ideas, and from the adieus of the servants, who with demonstrations, not very flattering to the superior mistress of the mansion, intercepted her in her way to the carriage, and with doubtful gestures and *despairing* hopes, wished her all the happiness she deserved, as the greatest good they could wish her.

CHAP.

CHAP. V.

THE variety of the road, and those common occurrences which Elizabeth's life of retirement rendered uncommon to her, by supplying her with new ideas, in some measure dispelled the extreme gloom of her mind; and the exertions she thought it due to Lady Jemima, who was wrapped in profound reverie, to make for her amusement, answered the better purpose of excluding painful presages from her own mind. Her ladyship was singularly obliging during the whole course of the journey; and on her arrival at her house in Merrion-Square, she introduced her *protégée*, to the Miss Byrams in a manner that obliged them to put on civil airs.

The very first business Lady Jemima dispatched, while her servants were sent to the mantua-maker, milliner, &c. &c.

was to write to her intimate friend Mrs. Hacombe. The subject she wrote on will be best explained by her own words; but first let us premise who this lady was.

Mrs. Hacombe was the eldest daughter of a half-pay lieutenant in the marines, of a noble family, and who, though not near enough to bear the *crescent* or the *star*, was not a little proud of the *fleur de lys*. In truth, his pedigree and his affinities were fore grievances to his very narrow income; but he was happy in them; and in a situation that may not unaptly be compared to that of a pedestrian, who enjoys enough of the partnership of an umbrella to catch all its drippings, he was very poor and very vain: the principal bond of union between him and the noble family he had the honor to be related to, was the friendship of a lady who was kept by the grandee; and by dint of submission and flattery, he had gained such interest with this im-

perious dame, that she forgot him as a relation of his lordship's, (which might not have furthered his success) and took him under her peculiar protection. She had a sister who was in the same situation as herself with an East-India governor; and setting this engine and my lord's authority to work on the nabob, she procured for the eldest of the lieutenant's many daughters, a degree of patronage that amounted to fitting her out expensively for the Bengal market, procuring her a passage thither, and recommendations of the first respectability to the inhabitants and rulers of that other world.

The young lady was shewy in her person, easy in her temper, and sufficiently forward in her manners; and so delighted was she with the opportunity offered her of seeing foreign countries, that she broke off two or three coquettish amours which she had begun at boarding school, and continued by the intervention of the maid;
and

and bending her thoughts wholly to oriental conquests, she grafted the character of a fine lady so inartificially upon a mind which no application could inform, no example could improve, nor any restriction correct, that nothing but her excessive confidence could prevent those interested for her from fearing her return upon their hands; and nothing but the unrestrained license of her tongue kept them from animadverting on her singularities.

But, deaf to every gentle hint, and intoxicated by the expence lavished on her, and the certainty of matrimony and wealth, she played over every air of folly, while she blest England with her presence, and then shewed how much wiser she was in the path of promotion, than all those who had shrunk from her example; for, notwithstanding it had been thought that the governor had seen her with eyes of not unreturned affection; and though the captain of the ship had been driven from his post in her heart

heart by a young ensign who was going on the forlorn hope of reformation, or rather transportation, she on her landing, captivated by her European complexion the sun-burnt heart of Mr. Haccombe, a gentleman, who having married and buried an English wife, and settled about half a score of a mulatto progeny, was now about to return home with the reputation of immense wealth, got nobody knew how, the tatters of a broken constitution, and a conscience which had seen still harder service; and in the following year, he brought home his wife, whom nothing but the hope of dazzling all England, reconciled to quitting the blissful laziness of a palanquin. Here her uneasinesses and complaints were endless—nothing was comparable to the delight and splendor she had quitted: Mr. Haccombe, whose passion for the Indies long acquaintance had abated, was better satisfied every day with old England, and less so every hour with his wife. His lady, who retained her

her personal attractions, and having united herself to wealth, sought now the distinctions of rank and high life, found amusement in that kind of flirtation with young men of fashion and title, which may end innocently or otherwise, at the discretion of the parties.

In town Mrs. Haccombe lived in all the enormity of expence her husband's reputed wealth, and her enormous vanity afforded. He was blown up with importance, and felt a degree of sweet complacency resulting from the compliments his lady's taste in her routs, her balls, her suppers, her conversations, her concerts, her dejeunés, her nonsense, and her profusion, procured him. At their seat in the country, he brow-beat, and she insulted all the neighbourhood. His game, his fisheries, and the insertion of his name in the commission of the peace for the county, were nuisances alike to the poor and the rich, while Mrs. Haccombe's succession of finery, and the reports

reports of her domestic prodigality, turned the heads of all the girls in the parish, and made many a wife, who would have been properly laborious and patient in her family, idle and ill-humoured. She was at Bath, her favourite scene of autumnal recreation, when she received from her old school-fellow this letter above referred to.

“ I OUGHT, indeed, to beg you ten thousand pardons, my dearest Lucretia, for not having wrote ages ago ; but I have been in an abyss of trouble, and overwhelmed with business of one kind or another. I suppose you have seen by the papers that Byram is dead—I thought you would have wrote to me upon it ; for it has been a sad scene of distress to me—he has left nothing for me and the girls, so if the old gentleman is as cross as usual, we shall be finely off---I have wrote to him ; but have not heard since---I wonder how Byram or any body could imagine I could

could save fortunes for the girls out of my poor pittance. You know, my Lucretia, how often I have been short of money, notwithstanding all Sir Clifford's boasted generosity to us---but I think I have found out how the money has gone; for I am sure the little I spent could never be felt. But this girl that you have heard me speak of, has, I am sure, had a great deal lavished on her.---It is, by the bye, confidently affirmed by all Byram's servants, that she is no child of his; but something must be done for her; and I am sure I cannot do much. I should be glad to be rid of her; for she is not the sort of person either you or I like. Now, it is very much in your power, to aid me in this point---I should like to get her out to the Indies---she might do there very well; for she is of a tolerable person, and pretty well accomplished, that is to say, she has a smattering of several things---we know how that is, when misses are called accomplished. Now if you would use your interest with Mr.

Haccombe

Haccombe to get her out, I could fit her out with my own clothes, which would, you know, be too *outré* for me when I am out of mourning. Write to me, dear creature, immediately, and tell me how much you can do to serve me; and then I will tell you more at large than I have leisure now, what are my future plans, and how much I am, my dearest Lucretia,

Your most sincerely affectionate

JEMIMA BYRAM."

CHAP.

CHAP. VI.

THIS great affair dismissed from her mind, Lady Jemima proceeded to the regulation of her mourning-accoutrements, in which, though entirely ignorant of the fund that was to defray the expence, habitual negligence of œconomy made her extravagant. Elizabeth too much astonished at the novelty of a metropolis, to have the use of her faculties, submitted every thing to her arbitrement; and alternately overcome by painful reflections, and roused by strange appearances, she felt most uncomfortably harrassed. Lady Jemima at her first leisure after her arrival, sent to let her know she should be happy to have her company. Elizabeth took her work-bag with her, and attended her ladyship, whom she found all sweetness and politeness, and whom, notwithstanding all previous disgusts, it was impossible not to regard with some return of affection.

The

The purpose of this sociable invitation, was to sound Elizabeth's inclination to an East India voyage. Ignorant as she was of the most usual occurrences of the world, it was not to be expected that she should understand the nature of these matrimonial expeditions; and to this want of information, Lady Jemima trusted for power to allure her by a dazzling description, which she could not find to be erroneous till the sea was between them. She therefore began the conversation with telling her that she had that day written in her favor to a friend of her's, and proceeded to give such an account as she thought fit of this lady's origin and success in the world; but she found herself so often interrupted by her auditor's total ignorance of first principles, that nothing but her deep interest could have prevented a natural habit of peevishness from shewing itself; but when she came to — *And so her friends thought it best to fit her out to make her fortune in India,* Elizabeth was obliged to beg some light
on

on this curious subject. "Why you must know, my dear," replied her ladyship with studied caution, "that when young women of good families and small fortunes turn out well, if their friends are desirous that they should make a proper figure in life, they furnish them with a great quantity of the finest cloaths, and get some friend to take them over to one of the English settlements in the East-Indies. You have no idea what pleasant parties go on such expeditions—perhaps ten or a dozen young ladies in one ship; and they take their musical instruments, and their works, and books, and whatever can amuse them; and the voyage is so safe and so delightful, that every body is in such spirits, it is quite charming. Don't you think my dear it must be very pleasant?—Should'nt you like it?" "I dare say it may be very agreeable" answered Elizabeth, working intently to hide her difference of opinion; "but are the ladies strangers?—the people in the ship must be; and I have a great aversion to strangers ;

strangers; so I could not think it pleasant.”
 “O no,” answered her ladyship, “they are
 very often a party of friends.”--“But *I* have
 no friends,” said Elizabeth with a sigh;
 “and I fancy it takes a long time to be a
 friend---so I am sure I could not like it.”--
 “Well, but my dear, you know it is one rea-
 son of my bringing you to town, that you
 should get rid of this shyness---you have no
 idea how soon people are acquainted, who
 live in the world; and if the voyage were
 not as pleasant as it always is, only think
 how they are repaid when they get to the
 end of it.”

“But, madam, I have read of ships being
 cast away, and every person on board pe-
 rishing.”

“O that never happens in that voyage---
 a great many ships go in company; and no
 accident ever happens.”

“Well, but madam, I suppose then all the
 young ladies that go have friends in India,

or

or else what are they to do when they get there?"

"Why those who have no particular connexions there, have letters of recommendation."

"What? to strangers?" interrupted Elizabeth, staring with astonishment.

"Yes, miss, to strangers," retorted Lady Jemima, unable totally to govern her pettishness, "and you must learn, I assure you, to accustom yourself to strangers---or how do you think I am to provide for you?"

"I thought, madam," replied the frightened girl, with tears of terror starting in her eyes, you meant to introduce me to some good lady of your acquaintance, with whom I should by degrees become intimate, and that then she would take me to be useful to her; and I might come and see you very often, till I was quite settled."

Settled

"*Settled* indeed," muttered her ladyship, "that would be a fine way of getting *you* settled.---But do you not think, my dear," continued she in a tone rather more guarded, "it must be a charming thing for a girl, without any fortune, as soon as she arrives in India, to be married to a man worth millions of money, and who would maintain her in all the state of a princess, in a country where they live in a style just like what you have read of in fairy tales, where every thing is of gold and diamonds?"

"Pray, madam," answered Elizabeth with a look of modest apprehension, "forgive my ignorance; but how can they get married if they know nobody?"

"O, my dear, the easiest thing in the world. When the ships arrive, the gentlemen of the country come to church, I believe to see the ladies; and they fix on those they like best to make their offers."

"But

" But then how can they love them ?"

" Love them, child ? What nonsense !"

" But surely, madam, it is impossible for any woman to marry a man she does not love--- and beside how can the gentleman tell whether the lady is good tempered, and such a person as he thinks would make him happy ? I suppose they must wait a long time before they are married."

" How like a simpleton you talk ! Elizabeth, do you think it necessary that all people should love one another before they are married ? or that a man must have known his wife from her cradle, to judge whether he likes her ? No no, as to love, it comes of itself afterwards ; and if it never comes, a woman must be very imprudent if she is unhappy ; and people who live in the world have a certain penetration about them that enables them to judge of one another at the first sight."

" Then

"Then that is the reason I suppose, madam, that the world is called *censorious*, because it does not stay to be well acquainted--- now, I am sure, if I were to pretend to judge at first, I should often have been mistaken already; for I could never have thought your ladyship would have been half so kind as you are to me, if I had formed an opinion when I was a little girl; but then, indeed, I was but a child, and now I know nothing of the world; but I am sure if I were to live ever so long, I could not marry any body I did not love."

"But how do you know you should not love the person who might be willing to marry you?"

"O I must have loved him before I ever thought of his marrying me---And beside, only think what it must be to go amongst strangers, to be looked at just like the horses, when dear Mr. Byram was going to buy one for me---I remember saying
to

to my poor governess when my father was looking at their eyes and at their teeth, that I wondered the horses could stand to be stared at without blushing; and I think the ladies going to India must be just like the horses."

Lady Jemima found the matter must be pushed no farther in this way; and to form an advantageous contrast to what she had been representing, she described in no very tempting colours the dependent situation of governesses, which was the alternative; but she found her young rustic proof against all the terrors she could depict; and answering all by a summary supposition that she should lead the life of her first governess, who, she was satisfied, would on no consideration have quitted her, she warded off all the discontent the craft of her superior would have inoculated on her simple mind, and shewed that she preferred infinitely industry and quiet to idleness and splendor.

The delay necessary in preparing Lady Jemima's funereal decorations kept her at home, and the melancholy which still overspread the mind and features of Elizabeth, damped the curiosity Dublin might otherwise have excited. No visitors came; the young ladies and their mama were not fond of each other's company: her ladyship therefore often had Elizabeth for her companion, by whose good sense and acquired knowledge it was impossible for her not to be entertained while her *nai-veté* and perfect ignorance of cities, afforded her no small diversion.

The Miss Byrams were by no means to be rendered familiar or even sociable: the eldest was by nature stupid, froward, indocile, and ill-tempered; the youngest a forward susceptible girl, with no ideas but those of tender passions and clandestine marriages. They felt their own inferiority, and hated their half sister for it, who, on the contrary, finding the young ladies
mere

mere babes in knowledge, and as malicious as ever to her, considered that she must be a very dull companion, and not chusing to be their sport, left them to their pursuits.

In a week of imprisonment Lady Jemima retained sufficient command of herself to mislead Elizabeth into a firm opinion of her friendship; and in that which followed she extended her indulgence so far as to take her with her, when, with all the state of widowhood, she went for her airings on the circular road, and amongst the beautiful varieties of the Phoenix park. Novel as was every scene to the immatured girl, she was forced to guard her heart against the attachment those pleasures were cementing, and to recollect that it was her lot to quit them, as soon as her *anxious friend* should have found for her a mode of life better suited to her humble fortunes.

Mrs. Haccombe was not as punctual as she might have been in her return to her *chere amie's* request ; but she was perhaps as punctual as so fine a lady held it necessary to be : for she wrote *at her very first leisure*. Before her answer arrived, Lady Jemima had a brief and rather a sullen one from her father-in-law, in which he reproached her with her culpable conduct, but said he would think of some method of settling his son's affairs. But a letter of far more seeming importance was brought to her on the third Sunday after she came home. It was evening, and she was yawning with *ennui* at home, while Elizabeth was reading to her. Her countenance changed remarkably as soon as she had opened the letter. In a sharp tone of voice she dismissed Elizabeth to her own apartment, with orders to remain there till she was sent for ; and then sat down to answer the most embarrassing epistle she had ever received.

CHAP. VII.

LET us leave her ladyship deep in meditation; and poor Elizabeth, frightened at her capricious dismissal, sitting on her bed, weeping over the miniatures of her father and mother, recollecting Dennis's incredible assertion, and deploring her cheerless situation; and let us turn our attention to her patient injured mother.

Inflexible to those representations and to those urgent offers of protection, with which at first Lord Armathwaite's letters to her were filled, she forced him to give up the contested point, and to submit to the barrier placed between them.—On no other terms would she maintain any intercourse with him; and as he saw that her refusal to take any step that might have liberated her, arose not from any abatement of attachment,

ment, but from a reverence to the institution that had made her Byram's wife, and from a regard to the interest and estimation of her daughter, he endeavoured to restrain his passion, in proportion as his adoration of her virtues increased, and found some satisfaction in the confidence she reposed in him.

She had the consolation of seeing Mrs. Halnaby as much at ease, as her fond anxiety for her would permit. She was not arrived yet at old age, and Joanna flattered herself that a long and cheerful autumn of life would reward her friend for her early sufferings.

The retirement in which they lived, and which was varied only by visits to Canterbury, by excursions about the country, and by the temporary residence of a small succession of valuable friends, afforded Mrs. Halnaby the quiet she loved, and Joanna those means of pursuing the attainment of knowledge

ledge her education had denied her ; and it was only in the soothing conversation of her protecting friend, or in a very close application to such studies as fill the mind, that she could lull her inquietude respecting her daughter. At first, after her separation from her, she had frequently ventured so far, as to write to Byram, supplicating intelligence of her ; but it was never to be obtained ; for early after his marriage he was under the error of supposing *Jemima's* conduct culpable ; and when this idea died on his imagination ; and his melancholy love got the better of his suspicion ; he felt every renewed remembrance of her so painful, that he shunned all communication, and found it easiest in general to strive to be indifferent.

Thus had *Joanna* lived ; having undergone a change of anxiety, without the least diminution, but rather with an aggravation of mental distress. In her youth

youth she had suffered cruelty, she had feared poverty; and a hopeless passion had preyed on her. Now she experienced every comfort that kindness could bestow; she knew herself, in case of Mrs. Halnaby's death, sole heiress to a fortune which her contracted mode of life accumulated every year to an amount more than equal to the injury it had sustained by young Halnaby's extravagance. Her attachment to Lord Armathwaite, though unalterable, was mellowed into friendship; yet still she was miserable, whenever her too prompt recollection turned on Elizabeth's doubtful fate.

Lord Armathwaite had soon grown weary of the bustle in which he had hoped to lose the memory of former distresses; and quitting his army connexions, had retired into Switzerland. His affairs occasionally drew him to England; and he then always visited Mrs. Halnaby; but he carefully avoided every place where it
was

was likely he might meet Byram or his sister, whose conduct, for causes very different, but equally strong, he detested.

But he could not remain in entire ignorance or perfect apathy respecting them. He was in London when the newspapers informed him of Byram's death; and, instantaneously looking forward to the consequences of this joyful emancipation, he set off for Chatham, whence he was but just arrived. Joanna was frightened at the precipitancy of his return, and at the furious vivacity of his countenance when he bounced into the room where she was sitting alone. He had scarcely breath to articulate a word, or recollection to preface what he had to tell, by composing his features. He seized her hand in silence, and only pointing out to her the article in the newspaper, which he had brought in his hand, he dashed into a chair, and became so agitated, that Joanna, neglecting that

which would have expounded the mystery, addressed herself only to learn what had so hurried him.

Fearing something had shaken the dominion he had obtained over himself with regard to her, and that she might on his recovery be forced to hear still more urgent solicitations than those he had ceased to use; she rang the bell, and requested Mrs. Halnaby might be told lord Armathwaite was arrived and unwell.--"No, no," said he, starting up with assumed firmness; "I am not ill."---He waited till the servant had shut the door, and then energetically added, "I am, my Joanna, either the happiest or the most miserable man on earth.--See here," continued he, snatching up the paper with violence, "that wretch Byram is at length dead; and after eighteen years of despair, you are now, my Joanna, mine. Contradict me, and you never see me more.---I have waited---I have sued---I have yielded" said he, after a pause she
could

could not interrupt,--- “ but I have still firmly, as when first I told you so, loved and adored you---Heaven grants you to me;---let us then repay ourselves for the cruel sacrifices we have made to honor and to duty.—O be my advocate” continued he to Mrs. Halnaby, who now hastily entered the room,---“plead, as you have heretofore done, my cause with Joanna;---but add to your arguments that she is now at liberty, and that she ought to reward the fidelity with which I have loved her,---”

It was unintelligible to Joanna's friend; but she, whom the frequent deceptions of fortune had early taught to possess herself, answered, instead of Mrs. Halnaby,---“You want no advocate with me, lord Armathwaite:---be composed,---the days of violent passion should be over with both of us. I have, I hope, acted reasonably, and you shall find me reasonable; but
for

for Heaven's sake be yourself, or you alarm me."

"Can I be myself," he replied mournfully, "and think that after the disappointment of my early love for you, after I had myself blasted all my prospect, after waiting thus long, and seeing you wretched beyond remedy, you may still, still refuse me the privilege I ask, of sharing your sorrow if I cannot alleviate it? Give me a father's interest in Elizabeth.---Byram is dead; and no one has a right to withhold her:---I will seek her;---I will find her---if she lives, she shall be restored to you. We will cherish her as our best hope---O my Joanna! give me a title to protect you."

The tears burst from Joanna's eyes; and Mrs. Halnaby interposed to stop the furious and incoherent language which the fermentation of his mind during the journey,

journey, dictated. She succeeded in calming him; and taking Joanna away, that her spirits might not farther suffer by his impetuosity, she calmly discussed with her the steps she meant now to take.

She found her reason and her inclination both advocates for her marrying lord Armathwaite; but so strongly opposed by her anxiety about Elizabeth, which the death of her only protector had now revived with greater force than ever, that till it was abated by some authentic information, either of her death or welfare, she could bend her mind to no other subject.---On her return therefore to lord Armathwaite, whose fears during her absence had defeated Mrs. Halnaby's design of rendering him more rational, she frankly told him there was now but one obstacle to her consenting, in a short time, to marry him; and that this was the doubtful fate of Elizabeth.---Could he

he by any means bring her under the protection of her now sole parent, or could he ascertain her fully of her death or comfortable settlement, she should feel it her indispensable duty to reward, as far as was in her power, the very generous attachment he had manifested to her.

CHAP.

CHAP. VIII.

It was this one impediment, which lord Armathwaite had too much humanity to treat lightly—it was this duty of seeking and finding Elizabeth, which occasioned lady Jemima Byram the disturbance she received from the letter brought to her: for it was from her brother, who in kind terms professed his concern for her situation, and offered her his services, with an intimation that he was in Dublin, and should call on her the next morning on business of importance.

Lady Jemima did not exactly know what this business would prove ; but concluding that it could be only an investigation of her affairs, she foresaw the disappointment of all her hopes from Sir Clifford, when it should be no longer a secret, that she had made away with the separate fortune she had with so much avidity secured to herself

self on her marriage. As objects of *charity* he might relieve her and her daughters by an allowance of two or three hundred pounds a year each; but far inferior was this generosity to the advantage she had promised herself, ever since Sir Clifford had given her to understand that he would interest himself in the arrangement of his son's affairs. By experience, she knew Sir Clifford to have a warm heart, and she believed a weak head---she remembered the power she once had over him; and her imagination, always disposed to extremes, bid her not doubt that she should be able to resume it. It was her visionary plan to prevail on him to return to Dublin, to which city he was, as a native, attached, and where he had built the very excellent house Byram had hitherto lived in. Should she succeed in this, to quarter herself and her daughters on him was no great difficulty: she could then more effectually guard against his marrying again, which she had now and then feared, and more than ever dreaded;

dreaded; and she could keep up appearances with regard to herself till she should bring some matrimonial scheme to perfection, when she resolved to leave the old gentleman and his grand-daughter to take care of themselves, and to set out herself anew in the circle of celebrity.

A plan so well concerted, it was pity to see frustrated by the officious interposition of lord Armathwaite, to whom she felt no tie either of gratitude or nature. She affected to consider him as coming in the character of a spy and an informer; and she resolved to keep him at a distance. For this good purpose, her ladyship, after much rumination, answered his billet in a style of polite resentment, intimating that his long alienation of himself from her, was not unnoticed, and requesting before she made any appointment, that she might know what particular business had procured the unexpected honor of his attention.

An

An answer was returned almost immediately, from the house of a friend, where he was, signifying, in terms of greater forbearance than lady Jemima had a right to expect, that the most urgent business he came on was to enquire after a relation of the late Mr. Byram's, with whose interest he was particularly charged. More than this he thought it not prudent to say, till he should know how far his sister had been in her husband's confidence.

The crafty widow felt relieved on one point; but her fears on another, no less important, were increased. She hoped; but it was almost a desperate hope, that the report of Byram's previous marriage was not true, if it proved true, she hoped her brother was not aware of it.— All this was the mere conjecture of artificial incredulity; and how to act, it was difficult even for her prompt wit to determine. At length, considering that to exasperate lord Armathwaite would be to hurry on what she much wished to protract,
she

she sat down to write an acquiescent billet ; but she could find no words to please her : she therefore gave the servant a verbal message that she should be glad to see his lordship in the morning.

She sent no more for Elizabeth that evening : her mind was too deeply engrossed to want amusement. She had, it is true, but one point to carry—this was to secure as much as possible of her father-in-law's property to herself and her children. To this the exclusion of Elizabeth appeared necessary ; for it never entered her crooked imagination, that a generous protection of an injured girl, and an appeal to Sir Clifford's justice and humanity, would have had just as good an effect, and by much shorter means. Cunning loves a labyrinth, and leaves the high road for wisdom.

The whole night was devoted to cogitation and projection ; and she rose in the morning

morning with a plan fully arranged in her mind, by which she might not only ward off the danger of Elizabeth's being set up as Mr. Byram's eldest daughter, but effectually provide for one of her own girls. All depended on lord Armathwaite's coming with a disposition very favourable to Elizabeth, who, she doubted not, was meant by *the relation* he had alluded to.

Previous to his visit, Elizabeth received a message from lady Jemima, civilly enquiring after her, and begging that, as she was going to be particularly engaged, she would not leave her apartment till she again sent to her. The unsuspecting dupe of this artifice was too well aware of her own ignorance to admit wonder or curiosity to disturb her; and on no consideration would she have disobeyed even the *implied* commands of lady Jemima.

Lord Armathwaite came, and introduced himself to his sister with an aspect of forgiveness

giveness and reconciliation, which she returned by distant civility and affected condescension. He expressed kindly his concern for the unprotected situation she was left in; and again offered his services: he then cautiously asked her if she had ever known any thing of a *young woman*, as he might call her, whom Mr. Byram had, very early in life, taken under his care.

"You mean Elizabeth, I presume," replied her ladyship, with a well counterfeited smile—"Mr. Byram's natural daughter."

"Mr. Byram's *daughter*, I certainly mean," answered his lordship, with an emphasis his auditor did not choose to notice.

"Well," replied lady Jemima, with affected vivacity, "what have you to say about Elizabeth?—she is with me, if you wish to see her."

"Is

“ Is she ? ” asked lord Armathwaite :
 “ then for heaven’s sake let me see her—
 deliver her to my care, I will conduct her
 to her mother ; and I shall then be happy.”

“ *You* be happy if I deliver Elizabeth
 to you ? ” replied his sister. “ Pray how
 are you and Elizabeth and happiness con-
 nected.”

“ By the most sacred of all ties,” an-
 swered he—“ by the sincerest love for her
 angelic mother, who has suffered all that
 cruelty could inflict, with the patient resig-
 nation of a martyred faint.—I am sent to
 seek her daughter, and she herself is to be
 my reward if I find her.”

Lady Jemima’s features were set ready
 to have expressed volubly her wonder and
 indignation at this warmth of attachment
 to a woman she would have despised had she
 dared, but her brother earnestly conjuring
 her without delay to give up Elizabeth to
 him,

him, she made her feelings yield to her cunning, and affecting the utmost candor, she told lord Armathwaite, after due preparation, and with the most solemn injunctions to secrecy, that there were particulars respecting Elizabeth, which as he so warmly espoused her interest, it was fit he should be acquainted with, though at present herself was the only person privy to them. She then with an air and tone of voice that completed the deception, began as follows :

“ Your unkind absenting yourself from me, my dear brother, has kept you totally ignorant of all the domestic occurrences of my family ; but I hope in future we shall be on better terms. You do not know my two daughters, or the uneasiness the conduct of the eldest has already, young as she is, given me. I believe, indeed, it contributed to hasten her poor father’s death.” The tears rolled from lady Jemima’s crocodile eyes--Lord Armathwaite was moved,
—she

—she saw success hovering over her plan : and she proceeded.

This untoward girl, beautiful in her person, and a prodigy of understanding, almost from her cradle, gave signs of the worst disposition. She and Elizabeth, and my youngest daughter were brought up together ; and I believe neither their father nor myself ever made much difference in our affection for them ; but, for what cause I know not, my eldest girl took the most unnatural dislike possible to me—so far as, in her frequent fits of passion, to endanger my life. Mr. Byram was extremely unhappy about it, and thought the best means to tame the violence of her spirit, and her excessive pride, was to keep her in the north, and to bring her up on a plan of mortification. Hitherto his sweet little Elizabeth had been kept there for the benefit of her delicate health ; and as the purpose of re-establishing it, was happily answered, I thought that if my own girl was

to be thus cut off from our family, it would be for Elizabeth's advantage and our comfort to make an exchange of them—thus to bring up *my* daughter as Mr. Byram's natural child, and Elizabeth as *my* daughter. Byram thought himself obliged to me for this attention to his girl; and dismissing such servants as were likely to thwart our designs, and keeping the children all together at Balla-craig for some time, we carried our scheme into execution, and Elizabeth is here now and knows herself only as Jemima Byram. The weakness of her constitution has a little impeded her growth, and hurt her figure; so that she appears hardly by two years so old as she is; but she is a very honest girl. As for my own, I am sorry to say her conduct has been every day growing worse. Byram advised me before his death to place her at a distance from me; but I could not have consented to it, had I not discovered such a scene of iniquity as astonished me. For some cause that I could not fathom, she chose to leave the apartment where she and

her governess usually slept, and while her father was unburied, to occupy a chamber that obliged her to pass through that where his body lay. Imagining that it might be from melancholy affection, which she was to sullen to own, that she made this strange choice, I took no notice of it, till I heard a report originating from her that the house was haunted. I did not like such an idle notion to get into the heads of the servants; so I set her governess to watch her; and we found that her visits to the chamber where the body was laid out, and her stories of ghosts, were only calculated to forward and conceal an intercourse she maintained with one of her father's men-servants. I had then no option—I was forced to think of securing her reputation, if I could not her morality. I therefore embraced an offer made me by a very worthy friend of mine to get her out to the Indies; and she set out yesterday.

Lady

Lady Jemima seemed so affected with the necessity of exposing her daughter's foibles, that lord Armathwaite suspended his curiosity, to console her. She struggled against her *maternal* feelings, and ringing for a servant, desired Miss Byram might be called down stairs. Miss, who had heard that there was a *lord* in the drawing-room with her mamma, and who was as conceited as her natural folly and her education could render her, would not stir without a previous adjustment at the glass; and in the interim her uncle, whose heart expanded with his prospect, and melted at the idea of his sister's sufferings, had opened to her his intentions, declared fully Joanna's legal claim on Mr. Byram; and to her great relief had explicitly assured her that, as his fortune was much more than equal to any want a family might produce, both he and Elizabeth's mother, whom her ladyship seemed vastly happy to recollect as the beautiful Miss Doveridge, meant to provide for the

young woman independently of any claim on her father's family. Lady Jemima still affecting to consider Elizabeth as the illegitimate offspring of her husband, commended this as prudent; but she was too wise to acknowledge it as an obligation. She talked her brother into a belief, that whatever follies she had been tainted with, had departed with her youth, and they were in perfect good humour with each other, when Miss Byram, with all her charms about her, introduced herself.

Lord Armathwaite in the joy of seeing the child of his beloved Joanna, forgot the obliquity of her form, and the character impressed on her features; and with a degree of rapture that might have been excused, was eagerly going to clasp her to his bosom, when in a mouthing tone of voice, accompanied by an incorrigible lisp, the young lady desired him to keep *biib bandth* off. He started back, as if conscious that he was wrong. Lady Jemima coloured

coloured with vexation ; but to keep up her affectionate character, she gently told *her dear girl*, that lord Armathwaite was happy to see her, and meant only to express his affection. “ I thought,” replied Miss, *he wath going to kith me; and that my gover-neth thaithe ith not fathionable.*” “ Well, my dear, you are right to be cautious; but here you need not be afraid,” answered lady Jemima, desirous to stop her daughter’s tongue, which the sight of a lord had made uncommonly fluent ; for in general she preserved a sullen silence ; and to this, which might have been excused as modesty, her mother had trusted for some part of her success.

However difficult the stubborn spirit of the young lady might render it to get her acquiescence to the plan, lady Jemima well knew it would carry the appearance of natural unwillingness to quit her home : she therefore had forborne tutoring her. It had been agreed by her ladyship and lord Armathwaite

Armatawaite that ſhe ſhould be informed of her error in ſuppoſing lady Jemima her mother, which, as ſhe was fifteen years of age, ſhe might be preſumed capable of comprehending; and lord Armatawaite by coaxing, by perſuaſion, and by endeavouring to render her familiar with him, hoped to induce her to return with him to England.

But Miſs Byram rendered all forethought uſeleſs: When told that ſhe was not to conſider lady Jemima, but a ſtranger to whom ſhe was to be introduced, as her parent, ſhe answered pouting, "Well, I hope *the* won't be *tho* croth." She next enquired who it was that was to be her mamma; and Lady Jemima, judging of her daughter's diſpoſition by her own, replied---"She will be, when you ſee her, or ſoon after, counteſs of Armatawaite, and my ſiſter,"---"I don't care *whooth thitbter the ith*," ſays Miſs, "if *the ith* a *peribon* of rank, and will let me have *fathcuhle clothe*, and *ath much money ath I like*."

Lord

Lord Armathwaite could no longer flatter himself that with her child, he should restore happiness to Joanna; and lady Jemima seeing his disappointment and vexation, observed, that Elizabeth, though deficient perhaps in elegant accomplishments, was of an excellent disposition. He scarcely knew how to take his sister's word; but recollecting that the affection she had expressed for this unpromising child, implied nothing but her own goodness, he could not justly look on himself as deceived by her, however he felt mortified.

The reward he awaited at the end of his journey was a stimulus to his dispatch; but when he turned his eyes on Miss Byram, he thought he could scarcely in carrying such a creature with him, claim the performance of Joanna's promise. He resolved, nevertheless, on embarking as quickly as he could, and a packet sailing the next morning, mamma, who was eager as he

he could be, for his departure, promised Miss should be ready to attend him. It was judged proper to keep the matter secret, out of a due regard to Mr. Byram's reputation and the pretended Miss Byram; and lord Armathwaite spent the remainder of this day in an excursion into the next county, on business.

These precious hours were employed by Lady Jemima in preparing Miss for the journey. To prevent her betraying the plot, she told her she was now going to a lady who would indulge her in every thing, provided she did not, before she arrived at the end of her journey, disclose the purpose of it. The young lady had craft enough to secure her tongue. A maid-servant newly hired was appointed to attend her, just as far as across the water; and she embarked, nothing loth, with lord Armathwaite the next morning, leaving lady Jemima in better hopes than ever of re-settling herself on the establishment of
ma-

matrimony, now that one of her two incumbrances was removed. To secure Elizabeth a prisoner to her chamber till Miss Byram was departed, her ladyship magnified into importance a head-ach the unfortunate girl complained of---she found out that she had a great deal of fever and many alarming symptoms, which would make it necessary she should confine herself for two or three days.

CHAP. IX.

THE English mail came in, soon after lord Armathwaite and his *lovely charge* had failed; and a letter came by it from Mrs. Haccombe, in which she told her dear friend, that she could immediately get the young person she mentioned out to India, if she would send her over. She was then going to London, where she would meet her and take the whole business on herself.

It would have been convenient to have sent Elizabeth over under the protection of lord Armathwaite; but this would have been a fatal step. Lady Jemima therefore cast about for some other means; and when she had settled the matter in her own mind, she sent for Elizabeth, and told her
that

that she had that day received a letter from her friend, who would be very glad of her company and assistance, till she should find a situation she liked better. Elizabeth curtsied; but recollecting the conversation she had held with her ladyship some days before, she begged to be assured that it was not her design to send her amongst strangers to the Indies.---Lady Jemima was not prepared for this resistance, which was expressed with uncommon firmness. Recollecting fortunately for her that, by the time the ship reached its destination, the passengers would no longer be *strangers* to Elizabeth, she availed herself of this wretched subterfuge, and replied with a confident negative.

To have fitted her out in a style calculated for the land of venal matrimony, would have been productive of two important evils, the one that such preparation would have rendered her suspicious, and probably obstinate: the other, that it
would

would have put lady Jemima's patience and hypocrisy to a farther trial, by retaining her in her sight. It was therefore more prudent to dispatch her to England, and send what her ladyship intended as a frugal substitute for splendor, by some following ship; and on this, as on every measure in unison with her own interest, she resolved.

Elizabeth's melancholy was but little increased by the prospect of a removal. She had accustomed herself to think she must earn her living; and grateful as she felt to lady Jemima for her supposed kindness, she had lately perceived such symptoms of returning ill-temper, as kept her on her guard and in fear. In her ignorance of the world, she could fancy no situation for herself, but that of governess to perhaps one or two young ladies, whom she pictured as models of perfection: she only dreaded her own inability; but she considered that due allowances must, in justice

tice, be made for a want of experience she meant not to disguise; and she promised herself, that by diligent attention she could in time atone for this deficiency. The most formidable part of her prospect was the necessity of going among strangers; but this nicety she repressed as unbecoming her dependence.

Whatever were her feelings, they prevented her sleeping that night, but she met lady Jemima with tolerable composure at the breakfast table in the morning; and enquiring for Miss Byram, was told to her surprise, that she was gone to England on a visit to her uncle. Another question she dared not hazard; for this answer was delivered with all that contraction of countenance with which usurped right imposes silence. Deterred by this mute menace, she turned her thoughts towards herself, and begged some instruction as to the situation she was to be placed in, and the duties that would be required of her.

I sup-

" I suppose if Mrs. Haccombe is so good as to let me be with her, she will expect me to employ myself in some way for her. Does your ladyship know whether she has any daughters?"

" No, she has no children. Mrs. Haccombe means to keep you with her, out of friendship to me, till she sees what you are fit for: and till you have acquired a little of the manners of the world; for I assure you, child, those starched airs and that affection of diffidence you have about you, will never recommend you---you must learn to think and act like other people, or you will never succeed like them---take my word for it."

" I cannot expect indeed," answered Elizabeth, while tears of mortification filled her eyes, " that I should be fit for any thing yet, just taken as I am from a confined situation."

" A con-

" A *confined* situation indeed ! Miss--- pray what situation must you have to please you ?---What I suppose you expected that I should be plagued with you and your accomplishments, and that you were to be treated just like one of the Miss Byrams--- no, I thank you ; I had plague enough with your father---I did not want any of his illegitimate dependents."

" Have I offended your ladyship ?"---asked Elizabeth trembling---" I am sure it was not my intention---I only meant to excuse myself and my ignorance."

" No, no, I am not offended"---replied lady Jemima, in a tone that seemed unwillingly to declare it ; " but pray do not talk about your *confined* situation---you have been more indulged than most natural children are ; and you have great cause to be thankful."

" 'Tis true, madam," answered Elizabeth, rising to depart, " I have abundant cause

cause to be thankful; but still permit me to recollect that, from some one or other, certainly humanity was my due---if I am Mr. Byram's natural daughter---and may nothing ever deprive me of the right to call him father! surely he was bound to take care of me---if I am an alien from his family, he must have taken the charge of me from some one else; and then too he was bound to protect me. But he did more for me than I could have any right to claim---he fed me; he protected me; and he instructed me; and had he lived, I should have never known what I now suffer."

Anger and tender recollection had forced from Elizabeth's swelling heart this reply; and gushing tears bore witness to her feelings; but a provocation so heinous as plain truth, is not to be forgiven by the tyrants of society. Lady Jemima in a rage, into which her fermenting passions were of themselves ready to kindle, ordered

Elizabeth

Elizabeth to quit her presence, and threatened, that since her spirit had shewn itself so violent, she would dispense with Mrs. Haccombe's giving herself any farther trouble about her.

Elizabeth had, for about two hours, repented in solitude the intemperate sincerity she had been provoked to---she blamed herself for ingratitude towards lady Jemima---she considered how Mr. Byram would have thought of her unguarded reply---she felt herself wrong; and her conscience, which early discipline and a natural disposition to peace made very susceptible of any deviation from the rule of passive submission, reproached her too severely to leave her any rest while lady Jemima had cause to be offended. She was ashamed to see her---she sat down to write in that style of culprit meekness, which though it might hurt a generous mind, the greedy of power are always willing to admit as a confession of their rights.

She

She was interrupted in the middle of a letter, where tears effaced the characters, by the sudden entrance of lady Jemima's waiting-woman, who, never a favorite with Elizabeth, now seemed a minister of vengeance. Importance and haste were in her countenance; and by her dress it appeared, that she had been or was going out. Without any preface, she desired Miss Elizabeth to get ready to walk a little way, a request that would not have startled her, as she had sometimes been permitted to see a little of the city on foot with this trusty Abigail; but the time, the haste, the suddenness of this invitation, and above all her previous interview with lady Jemima, and its conclusion, made her apprehend it more probable that she was to be punished than indulged.

To avert whatever might be the consequences of the offence she had given lady Jemima, she begged that she might be allowed to see her before she went out.

“ You

" You cannot, Miss; my lady is in a peck of troubles, and very busy."

" Dear Mrs. Brown, do let me see her ladyship---if you have any pity, do---I know I have made her angry---it is entirely my fault---do let me beg her pardon."

" I cannot, indeed, Miss---I tell you my lady is very busy---I am sure she would not---that is, she could not see you."

" Then I am sure," answered Elizabeth, bursting afresh into tears, " she must be very angry indeed---I confess I have deserved it, but I am certain if she knew how sincerely I repent what I said, she would forgive me."

" Lawk Miss! how can you make such a piece of work?---I know nothing about my lady and you; but I am sure she cannot see you."

" Then, dear Mrs. Brown, while I get ready,

ready, only be so good as to carry this letter to her. I had not time to finish it; but do take it, and beg her to say she forgives me."

"Why, dear Miss," answered the woman, as if compassionating Elizabeth, and yet unwilling to apply to her lady,---
 "don't mind such trifles;---if you and my lady have had a tiff, never mind---it will go off again."

"Aye, Mrs. Brown; but I was in the wrong; and I cannot rest till I have confessed myself so."

"Mercy on us," cried Mrs. Brown, with a sneering laugh, "why, if I was to own myself in the wrong half as often as my lady and I fall out, there would be no living with her. Let me give you one piece of advice, Miss:---if you would have lady Jemima do what you want at any time, keep her under your thumb."

"Keep

"Keep lady Jemima under my thumb?" repeated Elizabeth, not understanding the vulgar cant---"what is that?"

"Why keep the upper hand yourself."

"And how pray am I to keep the upper hand?"

"By giving her as good as she brings."

"I do not understand you."

"Why do as I do."

"How is that?"

"Why, when my lady chuses to find fault with me, which perhaps she will take into her head for a week together, I tell her she does not know what she would have, and that she may find somebody else to mind her whims, for I will be slave to nobody's humours."

"Aye,

" Aye, Mrs. Brown," replied Elizabeth, " that may suit you, but it would never become me---I am obliged to lady Jemima for every thing I have; and it would be very ungrateful in me to use such language---beside, where should I go, if lady Jemima were to turn me off?"

" Oh, there are places enough I warrant you. But her ladyship would not turn you off---She dares not do it."

" O, do not talk so! Mrs. Brown, indeed it is very wrong. Lady Jemima may turn me off if she pleases---she is under no obligation to take care of me."

" No obligation?---why, are not you her daughter-in-law?"

" I hardly dare call myself so."

" I don't know what you may call yourself; but I fancy one day or other her ladyship

ladyship will find——She has used me very ill I am sure, with regard to my mourning.”

“ Find what ? ” said Elizabeth, whose curiosity was more roused by the manner in which these words were spoken, than by the words themselves.

"Find what? Why find that you are Mr. Byram's daughter."

"I hope I am---but do you know what a strange thing I was told just before we came hither?"

At that instant, the loud voice of lady
Jemima summoned her attendant, who
forgetting all the injuries she had alluded
to, obsequiously obeyed the call, and pre-
sently returning with the looks she had
first entered with, hastened Elizabeth to
get ready for a short walk. She, how-
ever, on what authority she did not de-
clare,

clare, took on herself to assure her of lady Jemima's perfect reconciliation to her; and Elizabeth, that she might not again offend by refractoriness, as she understood it to be her ladyship's pleasure that she should go, obeyed.

The two dependents walked together to a house but a few streets off, where Mrs. Brown was received as an intimate, and where, after a little previous conversation, she proposed to leave her charge, while she went a little farther on some business for her lady. This was not at all agreeable to Elizabeth, who was sincere in her dislike of new faces, and feared, though why she could not tell, the being left alone there; but she soon found she had no alternative; and as the persons who had received her, were two decent and rather genteel middle-aged women, she endeavoured to appear satisfied.

These dames were extremely inquisitive as to the guest they were in possession of; but

but Elizabeth's sorrows were not such as encouraged her to be communicative—she felt reserved; and they obtained nothing but general answers from her.

Some hours elapsed; and Mrs. Brown was not returned. Preparations for dinner appeared, and the young lady was invited to partake of it; but, fixed at the window, in hopes every passenger might be her conductress, she declined the civil invitation. At last, wearied beyond all patience, she proposed returning to lady Jemima's; but being too little acquainted with the way she had been brought, to be certain she could find it again, she asked one of the gentlewomen to accompany her. Some difficulty was at first made; but her intreaties prevailed, and they were setting out when Mrs. Brown returned with a message that indicated her having been home already, for it was an order from her lady that Miss Elizabeth should remain where she was till she received farther commands.

To her questions after lady Jemima's and Miss Arabella's welfare, she received an answer, that they were very well ; but that the house was in such confusion in consequence of the arrival of some visitors, that while they stayed, her ladyship could not receive Miss Elizabeth again. Mrs. Brown, however, promised to spend every minute of her spare time with her; and she was forced to submit.

CHAP.

CHAP. X.

THE truly important business that had made lady Jemima desirous to have her house to herself, was an unexpected intimation that Sir Clifford Byram was landed, and would soon be with her. She could not flatter herself that he would not immediately take up his abode with her, as the house was, in fact, his own; and as the last piece of furniture she wished him to see in it, was her ill-treated daughter-in-law, she was compelled to turn her thoughts from the offence she had recently given her, to the security of her person against the very probable chance that she might be rescued from her power.

To see Sir Clifford was, notwithstanding all her hopes, matter of no joy to Lady Jemima, who could not quite suppress her fear that she had converted his former un-

just partiality to her into settled and far more reasonable dislike; but relying on her own fascinations, she did not doubt that the first interview over, she should be able to re-establish herself in his good graces. If he enquired for his eldest grand-daughter, she designed to tell him she was on a visit to her uncle, with whom she knew she could easily hereafter arrange any little matter of doubt, by referring to the mystery in which the young lady had been bred up.

Sir Clifford came; and Lady Jemima was not deceived in her idea of an unpleasant meeting. The old man was grievously hurt at the death of his son; and knowing how little comfort the object of all his former hopes had derived from his forced marriage, he seemed well disposed to hate all it concerned. Lady Jemima could neither soothe his affliction nor abate his antipathy by any of her eloquence or blandishments; for he brought with him
the

the strongest arguments against any credit that might have been given to her arts. These were immeasurable accounts of debts from tradesmen whom the widow, on the strength of his intimation that he would settle his son's affairs, had referred to him, in the mean time appropriating to her own use whatever sums of money she could lay her hands on. She was not aware that Sir Clifford was already in possession of these costly manuscripts; but their former owners had neither the faith, hope, nor charity to trust her; and with one accord, after a meeting called among themselves for the purpose, had transmitted to the only quarter they had reliance on, copies of their long-standing demands.

They might literally be styled vouchers for Lady Jemima's prodigality; and none but herself could, without blushing, have seen extant such records of folly. Nine tenths of their amount were charge-
able

able to her, rather than to her husband; and not a vestige remained to justify one fourth of it. Equipages, furniture, dresses, were vanished like fairy bounty; and demands of all sorts from both kingdoms seemed to have no more substantial foundation, than in the caprice of the vender or the consumer.

The production of these papers was deferred till after dinner; for Sir Clifford's grief was at first too strong for any discussions. Lady Jemima, in the mean time, after the kindest attentions and most sympathetic condolences, offered to his notice her youngest daughter, expecting that she would be considered as the mournful relic of Sir Clifford's hopes, but Miss, who had no other idea of a rich old man than as a cross miser, was not a fit herald on the occasion: she entered pertly, looked saucily, sat a few minutes indignantly, and then departed haughtily on finding her grand-

grandfather too much absorbed in melancholy to notice even *her* charms.

Lady Jemima watching every turn of his countenance in hope to get some advantage, sat down to table with him; and with the kindest urgency, intreated him to eat. He seemed scarcely conscious of her presence---he took only a morsel; and as soon as the servants were withdrawn, he began to explain a degree of agitation that seemed too great for the supposed cause, by the severest reprehensions of her ladyship's conduct, and by unloading his pockets.

He asked her how she could justify so enormous an excess of his liberal allowance to his son, and how far she thought the fortune settled on her for her separate use, would go towards discharging demands which he protested he would never take on himself. "As far," said he, "as my son appears to have been concerned in these expences, I will attend

attend to them; but not one shilling will I pay, madam, for your particular nonsense--- It has almost broke my heart to see the folly and misery that your entrance into my family has brought upon it; but it was, I confess, my own foolish act---Byram would never have married you, but by my command; and I believe, nay I am certain, your conduct, if not your temper, hastened his end."

So violent an attack, even the studied hypocrisy of Lady Jemima was not prepared against: she returned with interest railing for railing; and the conversation grew so warm, that Sir Clifford, who had too much politeness to turn the lady out of his house, quitted it with a resolution to see her no more.

The first moments after his abrupt departure were given to anger; but the next suggested to Lady Jemima the necessity of cool procedure. She saw all her premeditated

ditated acts abortive: she saw herself condemned; and her sagacity taught her that Sir Clifford's affections would probably be wholly alienated from his son's family. On whom was it to be apprehended they would fall?---Doubtless on Elizabeth, should he once hear of her. This evil, all the natural and added passions of her bosom, prompted her to avert. She hated, she feared Elizabeth, and resolved, before she bestowed another thought on the detested old man and his penurious whims, that she would remove her formidable competitor out of his reach.

Aware that a continuance of violent measures might defeat her purpose, she suppressed whatever resentment Elizabeth's unguarded reply to her had excited; and with kind expressions recalled her from her banishment. The ingenuous girl, grateful for her imagined goodness, threw herself into her arms on seeing her; and expressed her contrition for the offence

she had given her. Lady Jemima declared herself perfectly satisfied, and bidding her sit down by her, with manifest agitation, and the most treacherous countenance, began thus to her.

“I was afraid, my dearest girl, you would construe my sending Brown out with you into resentment on my part; but be assured I am incapable of such meanness; and beside, the offence you imagined yourself to have given me did not warrant it. At the moment of your quitting the room I had a message from Mr. Byram’s father, informing me that he was landed, and would call on me almost immediately. I cannot say I think it was polite not to give me more notice. I wished him not to see you, before I could introduce you in the way I wished to his regard. I therefore sent Brown out with you, not doubting that when I had told Sir Clifford the situation you were left in, he would, if it were only out of regard to his son, whom he professes
to

to love, do something for you, but I was soon taught to think more humbly of my own rhetoric; for *old* men, I believe, whatever change there may be in the *young* ones, are the same in all ages and countries; and no man on the other side sixty loves any thing but money. Notwithstanding the explicit assurance he had given me in one of his letters, he now positively refuses to pay one shilling of Byram's debts, though we lived in his life-time only on a scanty allowance from him, which he knew could not maintain us decently; and when I had given up this point as of less importance, and tried to rouse his humanity by mentioning that his son had left an unacknowledged daughter for whom I was much interested, utterly destitute, I am sorry to say he fell into the most brutish passion, and ordered me to say no more about her. Perhaps I was injudicious to press the matter farther; but really I could not endure such cruelty; and I urged him by every argument I could

suggest to consider you ; but it was without effect. He was violent against his son's indiscretion, and declared, that should you at any time presume to disgrace his family by taking his name, he would find means to prevent every body from affording you protection.---You will therefore, my dearest Elizabeth, think what you had best do---I tell you, that you may know how to act---Suppose you were yourself to go to Sir Clifford---but I think you say you do not like seeing strangers."

"O no, no, madam," answered Elizabeth, overcome by the renewed sense of her own forlorn situation, and by lady Jemima's seeming goodness---"I will never intrude on Sir Clifford---he shall not be offended by me---I will seek a livelihood where he shall never hear of me ; and I will endeavour to forget who I am."

"You will do right, my love," replied lady Jemima, tenderly taking her hand ;
for

for Elizabeth was now at the point all her endeavours were aimed at, namely that of giving up all connection with her family. "I would advise you to act independently of every body, and treat those who neglect you with the contempt they deserve."

"I can never treat my father's father with contempt," answered Elizabeth, suppressing her tears.

"No, my dear; but I would not have you subject yourself to his ill-nature. The knowledge of who you are can never be of any use to you.---It may be of infinite detriment to your success in the world:---people do not like the idea of natural sons and daughters in a family; so I would advise you to change your name for some one that may not be suspected; and then you may do what you will."

"I have no name, madam, but Elizabeth,"

"True,

" True, my dear, bastards are not allowed any surname; but it will be necessary you should take one. I shall lose no time, you may be assured, in sending you over to my dear Mrs. Hacombe, who I know will be a parent to you; and this will secure you from any thing Sir Clifford may project. I should not wonder, in the humour he is in, if he were to take it into his head, to send you to a convent; for I dare say the old gentleman is half a papist in his heart."

" Were that the worst," replied Elizabeth in the deep tone of profound misery, " I would not shun him---I should like to be a nun---I dread more his throwing me upon the world amongst strangers."

" What? Would you change your religion?"

" I do

"I do not know, madam---I should do it for peace, and to secure me from doing wrong ; and then I think, if I were sincere, it might be forgiven."

"O dear ! by no means, I assure you---I hope nobody I have any regard for will ever change their religion."

To be sure it was a matter of great importance with lady Jemima to be steadfast in her creed ; for it was her only tie to the church she belonged to. Divine worship was always at an hour inconvenient for her attendance ; daily devotion was nonsense in her refined imagination ; and as to that irregular, but perhaps still more acceptable incense which the heart spontaneously offers to the protecting deity from the midst of crowds and the tumult of gaiety, she had no idea of it. The world and her passions had engrossed her ; and if ever she *did* make any use of the superstitious language of religion, it
was

was to express her surprise, her pleasure or her resolution, by the various appellations of its object---but lady Jemima Byram would not for the world have hazarded her precious soul by renouncing her form of religion, unless indeed she could have gained by it any thing to which obstinacy was an obstacle.

CHAP.

CHAP. XI.

WEARIED with the commotion of the day, Elizabeth retired early to rest; and with a deeper sense than ever of her own wretchedness, paid her evening offering of looks and tears to the two miniatures of her father and mother. With more than usual strength of recollection, she called to mind Mr. Byram's words. "*And if ever any doubt of your birth arises, look at this*"——Alas! how was the ivory or the depicted resemblance to answer any query her distresses might dictate?

She received an early visit from lady Jemima in the morning: the purport of it was to inform her, that the packet sailed that afternoon, and that she had the preceding evening arranged every thing with the captain, that could make her passage agreeable.

" I must

" I must then go amongst strangers,"---
replied Elizabeth, in a tone of mortified
resignation, " Well---it will be best for
me---I thank you, dear madam, for all
your goodness---I shall be quite ready---
but I hope you will give me a letter to
Mrs. Haccombe."

" O yes, certainly. But we were talk-
ing, my dear, of your taking some sur-
name---What shall it be?---Shall it be
Brown, or Smith, or Taylor, or any of
those names?"

" They sound so vulgar, madam---I shall
be thought to belong to nobody of any
consideration."

" And what does that signify?" re-
turned lady Jemima rather sharply, and
not disposed to make any allowance for the
juvenile punctilio of a pretty-sounding
name

" I was

"I was thinking, madam, to take the name of *Peregrina Lamorne*."

"*Peregrina Lamorne*, indeed!---a mighty fine name---pray why do you chuse it?"

"I think it is descriptive of my situation; for *Peregrina*, you know, is a wanderer; and *Lamorne* would just suit me; for I am sure I shall be sorrowful."

"Well, what you please---only take care to be ready in time---Brown shall go with you to the water side."

There may be, and there doubtless is, a foreboding sentiment of melancholy accompanying the expectation of what is unpleasant to the mind; but how trifling it appears when compared with that with which the reality sometimes strikes on the mind, however taught to look for it!-----Who that has experienced for months, nay, perhaps, for years, all the charm

charm of life that attends the society of a friend born to soothe its anxieties and to adorn its pleasures, can sufficiently prepare themselves, in the longest interval, for that moment, when the "*And now farewell:--God bless you,*" are the words that vibrate in the ear in mournful cadence?--- Much indeed of the solace of *real* friendship Elizabeth had never enjoyed while with lady Jemima, who was by turns benevolent or captious, just as suited her schemes or her humor; but the total of her goodness amounted, in the conceptions of her dependent, to a vast heap; and her gratitude overcame her disgust as often as she opposed her ladyship's favors to the injuries she sometimes fancied she had suffered in being denied on all hands any substitute for parental protection.

Now that her fate seemed irrevocably decided, she felt herself removed to a middle state of being, which placed her at an equal distance from all connexion with the world.

world. It was to her idea an ocean affording, not only neither port nor harbour, but destitute of all terrestrial boundary; and her spirits sunk with horror and dismay at the frightful picture. But the short space of time she was allowed for her last preparations was favorable to her. She finished her packing, dressed herself in her habit; and turning round to behold for the last time her apartment and its furniture, she went down to dine with lady Jemima and Miss Arabella.

She requested to know whether her musical instrument and those little elegant accommodations, which had assisted her early attempts in the arts, might not be sent over to her; but she was told it had been Sir Clifford's express order, that nothing at the house in the north should be touched till he had been there himself. "But," added lady Jemima, "if you wish for satisfaction on this point, you could write to him: you will, I dare say, prepare yourself

self properly for the sort of answer he may return you.

" O no--- I should dread writing to Sir Clifford---I will leave it to you, dear madam---perhaps when he has been to my father's---to Mr. Byram's I mean--he may enquire about the instrument, and let me have it."

This was a poor dependence---for lady Jemima, pressed extremely, it must be confessed, for ready money, had already contracted for the sale of all Elizabeth's little scientific property, to a person about to establish, or rather to *attempt* a school in the neighbourhood. It was true, she had got but half the value of what she sold; but the bargain was a bargain, and the money was money.

" Your ladyship will do me the honor to write to me, I hope---and Miss Arabella will, I am sure, favor me with a letter now and then---And pray give my affectionate

affectionate regards to Miss Byram, when she returns, and say how happy it will make me to hear of her."

"O yes, we will certainly write," replied lady Jemima. "I believe Brown is ready to go with you---pray take care it is not too late. Finish your glass of wine."

Convulsive tears, no longer to be subdued by fear or fortitude, gushed from Elizabeth's eyes and choked her utterance. Lady Jemima bid her own proud heart rest for the few remaining moments; and in silence waited the subsiding of her emotion. Miss Arabella, whom nature had never taught to feel or understand distress, leaning her elbow on the table, and setting her nails against her teeth, with a broad stare at her relation, asked her "what she cried for." Elizabeth roused her recollection, and drying her still overflowing eyes, rose and taking lady Jemima's

not

not-extended hand, begged to know "when she might hope to see her again---whether in months or years."

"O, that depends entirely upon yourself and your situation," she answered, "I can give you no satisfaction on that head, till I know how you are settled."

"May I, in any difficulty, presume to request your advice?"

"You will hardly need it. Be guided wholly by Mrs. Haccombe; and be satisfied that I could never approve what she does not---follow her implicitly---she is a woman of great understanding, and has your good very much at heart. As I mentioned you to her only as a young person I was much attached to, she is not aware of your unfortunate situation---you will do well therefore to be cautious of revealing it, especially while Sir Clifford is

is

is thus vehement against you---any imprudence of this kind might not only ruin yourself but all of us; for he will suppose I have purposely affronted him. Promise me, therefore, that I may know how to act for your good, that you will keep *your origin, your family, and every thing respecting your connexions here, a secret.*”

“ I certainly will, madam. But pray shall not I want a little money?---how can I get it?”

“ Why yes, you will want a little; but captain S. is paid for your passage, and will accompany you to London---he is going there on business, and Mrs. Haccombe will be there to receive you---here are five guineas for you---you will not need more. And here is my letter to Mrs. Haccombe---give my kindest love to her, and tell her I am in so unsettled a state at present, I can decide on nothing,

but I hope it will not be long before I am in England."

This hint cheered a little the drooping girl, but it was followed with a look from the speaker, that seemed to exclude her hearer from all interest in her movements: Elizabeth did not, however, attend to it ---she extended her hand to Miss Arabella, who replied with a cold---"good bye."

The coach was ready,---Brown attended,---her little hand-packages were given in; and not having once taken her handkerchief from her eyes, she found herself at the water's edge.

The unpleasant novelty of the scene scattered her ideas; and in some measure absorbed her sorrow.---The hurry of aquatic commerce she was unacquainted with---the noise alarmed her---the huge bulk of the vessels near her astonished her,

her, till she almost ceased to breathe--- the element in view appalled her; and when she found herself on board the packet, she was scarcely conscious how she got there. Mrs. Brown had parted from her with some symptoms of regret; and she sailed for England in search of that protection she could expect from strangers alone.

CHAP. XII.

LADY Jemima now felt her mind at ease from a weight that had oppressed her almost beyond the patience of her hypocrisy; and she had leisure to turn her thoughts in all their vigor towards the untractable Sir Clifford. Before she retired to rest, she had, in her own fertile imagination, projected a new plan of attack on his weak side, which she did not doubt would succeed infallibly. This was a candid confession of her dissipation and extravagance, which she could prevail on him to consider as *past* errors, no more to be repeated or apprehended, now that rolling years and the sorrows of life had ~~matured~~ her judgment: she meant to insinuate, that her steady perseverance in an amended course would depend on his encouragement, that she requested only
to

to be allowed to spend her days under his protection, and that by her constant attention to his future comforts, it should be her study to atone for all her former indiscretions.

This plan might have succeeded had time been allowed for its operation ; but Sir Clifford, more and more disgusted by the increasing proofs of his son's want of prudence and her ladyship's want of principle, had likewise, before the hour of rest, digested in his mind the plan *he* meant to abide by ; which was no other than a total dereliction of Lambert's wife and children. This determination he expressed early the next morning by a friend, who found Lady Jemima in the act of composing her recantation. He informed her that it was Sir Clifford's pleasure that she should within a fortnight quit that house, and give up whatever Byram had held by his favor.

No

No gentle terms were fought to soften this harsh message: the person who officiated for Sir Clifford, appeared vehement in his interests; and the firmness with which he executed his mission declared his approbation of it. Lady Jemima, thrown entirely off her guard by the suddenness of the blow, exclaimed; "Good God! then I have nothing!---Does Sir Clifford mean to reduce me and my children to want?---Are we to sweep the street, or to beg, for a livelihood?---What, does the covetous old fellow wish to have his grandchildren curse him?---They will, they shall curse him; and I will teach them to do it.---An old miser! this was the scheme of his seeming bounty to his son, to indulge his extravagance while he lived, and to ruin his children after his death.---Tell Sir Clifford, Sir, from me, that I will stick at nothing to be revenged.---I will not starve to please him.---I can have money where and when I will; and as for his grand-daughters, they shall

shall not work indeed to disgrace him; but they shall walk the streets and boast themselves Byrams."

"Have patience, good Lady," replied the ambassador: "Sir Clifford is not likely to be daunted by your threats, but he may be rendered inexorable by your fury.---He is hurt; and his fortune will feel Mr. Byram's and your boundless profusion; and surely for such depredations on his bounty, it is no *adequate* punishment to leave you to live on the separate income you secured to yourself on your marriage, which I know to be enough to maintain you and your daughters in decency. It is more than four hundred pounds a year."

"And pray, Sir, what are four hundred pounds a year to maintain a woman of rank like me? Do you know, Sir, who I am?"

"Per-

“ Perfectly well, Madam; you were the daughter of Lord Armathwaite, left by him without a shilling, and fortunèd by the liberality of your brother: you have lived in such profusion, that *competency* is poverty in your estimation.---The waste of any one of your houses would have fed the poor around you.---At your house in the north, Sir Clifford is well informed that whole quarters of meat were weekly buried to prevent the contagion of their putrefaction.---Here you have had a set of thieves for servants, because your temper and your negligence drove all others away from you.---At your temporary ready-furnished abodes in London, your entertainments have exceeded all in extravagance.---At Bath, at Tunbridge, at almost every place of dissipation in both kingdoms, your family is remembered as the most easily gulled of any of those who come thither with full pockets and empty heads——therefore think not, Madam, I am to be awed by your rank
or

or your tongue.---Sir Clifford is my friend
---He is wounded to the soul at the discovery of *your* worthlessness, but if I can prevent it, he shall not be duped by it."

With these words the stranger was quitting the room; but Lady Jemima, choaking with passion at finding herself conquered where she was uniformly successful---in a war of *words*---was yet not so blinded by passion as to crush all her hopes for want of a little art. In a voice scarcely audible, she begged to be heard:---the stranger returned, and bursting into tears she said:

"Forgive, Sir, my impatience: I am almost mad with distress.—Tell Sir Clifford I am at his mercy---I and my girls---for to my shame I confess it---I have nothing."

"Nothing? Madam!"

H 5

"No,

"No, nothing."

"What is become of the money settled on you at your marriage?"

"It is gone--I prevailed on my trustees."

"Gone?---How?"

"I know not how.---I have spent it."

"Impossible!---Why it was more than ten thousand pounds!"

"'Tis true---but had it been twenty I should have spent it."

"And would you have me tell this to Sir Clifford!"

"Yes; and beg him to save us from ruin."

"Cer-

“Certainly, Madam.---But do you think Sir Clifford will not be exasperated still farther?”

“I know not---but I cannot---I will not starve---tell him so.”

Her passion was returning---the stranger perceived it, and promising to use his interest with Sir Clifford, and desiring her to wait patiently till she heard from him, he left her.

Lady Jemima's constitution was not quite so tough as her conscience. The agitation of her spirits, and the waking cares she had experienced in ripening her many plots, had whirled her brains into a fever; and this last effort made it break out with a degree of violence which, though it did not immediately threaten her life, deprived her of all her usual energies. She took care that Sir Clifford should be informed of her illness; but he,
con-

considering it as the stale artifice of her well-known cunning, paid no attention to it; and when she was well enough to think again of *business*, she had the mortification of hearing that he had failed for England. He had left for her a brief letter, or rather a kind of epistolary ejection, in which, without taking the smallest notice of the representations she hoped had been made to him, he informed her that his steward would be ready in fourteen days to take possession in his name, of all that his son had held by the tenure of his permission.

Lady Jemima was thunderstruck; and indeed she might be astonished; for she knew Sir Clifford well enough to be convinced, that inhumanity was no feature of his character: she had persuaded herself, that whenever she chose to submit, he would accept her submission; and in her case, whatever might have been her errors, that a regard to decency would certainly

tainly have procured from him at least a limited attention. All these considerations should have induced Lady Jemima, and would have excited any other person to seek an explanation of such seeming inconsistency, by the gentle means of cool argument; but accustomed to put the worst construction on the actions of every one, her sagacity and misanthropy deceived her, and led her into a most fatal error. In a paroxysm of rage, she sat down, and wrote to Sir Clifford in a style of such invective, as would have rendered the production of her letter her greatest punishment and his best revenge. In it she anticipated his repentance of his severity, in these words:

“ Your flinty heart will perhaps relax in some moment of capricious tenderness ---such tenderness as I long ago have perceived, laughed at, and despised, when fascinated by my persuasions, and intoxicated by the flattery your own folly encouraged,

couraged, I have brought your stubborn spirit to my every purpose. You will now, perhaps, left only to the waywardness of your own humor, in some gloomy hang-dog November day, fancy you have been cruel to me and my children; and should the symptoms of your gout attack you, you will look on it as a judgment of Heaven. And for fear Satan should whet his claws for you, you will make a cowardly codicil to your will which will revoke all its purposes, and intreat me to appease your manes by accepting your hoards.---Be assured, venerable Sir, however soon (and the sooner the better) that event may happen, which shall give efficacy to your last will and testament, it will find me alike out of the reach of your despicable love or hatred. A head endued like mine, will not long rest till it has obtained its purpose. It is policy of such as fear the wise to keep them free from discontents."

CHAP. XIII.

To have admitted a sentiment of pity after reading so daring a defiance, would have been to give currency to the libel; but Sir Clifford was not at all disposed at present to relax into any of that tenderness which her ladyship had prognosticated.—His anger had, it is true, been kept alive by means no more justifiable than Lady Jemima's errors; for the person he had deputed to attend her had an interest in her ill success. His name was Lassiter: he was an attorney, and living near Sir Clifford in Northamptonshire, had some years before so far ingratiated himself into his good opinion, as to get the stewardship of his estates and the management of all his affairs in England: he had risen from the capacity of footman in the family of a practitioner of the law in London,—had married the cook, and having talents
that

that rendered the stage or the desk equally eligible, he chose the latter, and his master dying, prevailed on his successor, an idle young man, to article him for the time requisite to his setting up for himself:——he had encouraged his new patron in all his vicious propensities, and having seen him reduced in due time to the want of a sum of money, not greater than his savings gave him the power of commanding, he had advised him to relinquish the toils of business for an inadequate consideration:—the bait took, and Mr. Laffiter became, by virtue of his profession, a gentleman; but his practice growing at length a little too bold, and some intimation having been given by the higher powers that he was marked for annihilation, he had avoided the storm by shifting his quarters; and relying on the connexions of his birth-place, and his skill at forwarding his own interests, had settled in the town of A—— in Northamptonshire.

Here

Here he soon fixed his eyes on Sir Clifford as good game for his prowling avidity, and carrying a specious outside and a tongue well calculated to recommend himself, he soon obtained an insight into his patron's domestic situation---soon learnt his uneasinesses and their sources.

He had long looked with a jealous eye on Byram and his father's doting attachment on him---he had wisely considered that this one impediment stood in the way of Sir Clifford's making an optional bequest of his property; and considering himself as an object as fit as any other to be his heir, if he had but science enough to juggle out all other pretenders, he had boldly projected and entered on a plan of disinheritorship; but he had just found Sir Clifford's partiality too strong for his endeavors, and, to save his credit, had just given up that part of his scheme, when the friendly hand of death removed this formidable rival.

Sir

Sir Clifford had been so far duped by this designing knave as to admit him into his confidence: he had told him how Byram's imprudence distressed him; but this in his extreme indulgence and his wish to atone to him for his compulsory match, the natural goodness of his temper disposed him to overlook.---It was not so with the follies of Lady Jemima: he thought it a serious thing for a wife and a mother to be perpetually exposing her reputation to scandal and her honor to danger by that sort of levity which courted impertinent freedom:---he could find out no virtue in her---he could not love her; but he would never have hated her, had not Lassiter, who affected feelings superior to his own, from time to time delicately whispered the reports he heard from Ireland, or whatever other places Lady Jemima resided in. From Dublin, by dint of a good correspondence, he was furnished with a minute detail of all her levities and eccentricities; for Mrs. Brown, her
ladyship's

ladyship's waiting-woman, was his wife's sister, placed there on purpose; and whenever her lady visited England, he made it his business to cross her path, that he might on his own knowledge bewail her deplorable misconduct for the winter evenings' amusement of Sir Clifford.

His sister-in-law had not failed to furnish him with the legend of Elizabeth; and formerly, in hopes of ruining Byram in his esteem, he had broached the subject of this *illegitimate* daughter; but here he met with a rebuff; for Sir Clifford declared himself not at all inclined to believe the story of this daughter, nor disposed to make any enquiry.

But now that Byram was dead, and Lady Jemima by her neglect had shewn her contempt of him, it was greatly to be feared that his kindness might center in this unacknowledged grand-daughter:--- it was therefore Lassiter's policy at any rate

rate to clear the fame of Mr. Byram by declaring, from much better authority than any he had yet had, the falſhood of the aſperſions thrown on his moral character: he told Sir Clifford when he accompanied him to Ireland, that the information he had hitherto received, he believed to have originated with perſons who promiſed themſelves ſome advantage in ſetting up a claimant on his charity; but that by thoſe who had lived in the family for many years, he was aſſured that Mr. Byram had no natural daughter, and that the young perſon ſuppoſed to be ſo was a ward, whom at the time of his death he was fitting for making her fortune in the Eaſt Indies.---With this hint his ſiſter-in-law had furniſhed him; and thus they both forwarded lady Jemima's views without her underſtanding the motive; for Mr. Laſſiter and Mrs. Brown were equally hoſtile to lady Jemima and her rival.

During Sir Clifford's ſhort ſtay in Dublin, Laſſiter had raked together every particular

ticular of Merion-square follies to complete his disgust towards lady Jemima and extend it towards her children, and he had succeeded to his wish.---He had gladly undertaken the embassy to lady Jemima, because he knew it was in his power to set the parties at implacable enmity:---he had reported all her ladyship's insulting language---he had even told of her extravagant annihilation of the fund supposed sufficient for her maintenance, but he had described her as rejecting every offer Sir Clifford could make, and as preferring the most iniquitous celebrity to any favor from him; and her letter had, unhappily for herself, and fortunately for Lassiter, confirmed his aggravated report.

Having accomplished another great end, that of obtaining the stewardship of all the Irish estates, in addition to that of the less property in England, he persuaded Sir Clifford to return into Northamptonshire, that he might there be rocked to sleep

sleep without fear of any one's breaking his slumber: to his wife he committed this care—himself staid to witness the downfall of lady Jemima.

She bore the disappointment of her hopes from Sir Clifford with the patience of an enraged lioness, though her *cubs* were, it must be confessed, not her principal care. So far were maternal affections from softening her rage, that her character of a mother only tended to exasperate her by interfering with her selfishness. She trusted she had effectually got rid of Miss Byram, whom she did not doubt lord and lady Armathwaite would, for their own sakes, as she would have done to rid herself of trouble, marry off as soon as possible; but Miss Arabella, a great awkward forward girl of fourteen, was to be disposed of, and how to detach herself from this impediment to the style she meant to assume, was a point not easily adjusted by one who had not five hundred

dred pounds at her command.—The young lady had not even the promise of those qualities that might supply the deficiency of fortune in procuring her a husband; and even had matrimony been the goal, her ladyship was neither able nor willing to furnish the expences of the race. To apply to lord Armathwaite for aid, was a step she was very averse to, for the less intercourse we maintain with those we deceive, the more wise we shew ourselves. The want of plan compelled her for the present to rest. She employed the few remaining days which she was allowed to pass in Merion-square in vilifying Sir Clifford,—and in artfully encouraging to an avowal of a *dangling passion* a nobleman whom she had enrolled in the list of her admirers.

While Byram was alive, the intercourse between these two personages had been only noticed as flirtation. His Lordship was high in the scale of gallantry, and was
admitted

admitted into most families with that caution with which a mastiff is exhibited in a parlour. Her ladyship was more flattered by his attentions than by those of all her other lovers; because to be the object of *his* notice excited a more general envy amongst her own sex; but as she valued her conquest, she was prudent in her management of it, and knowing in how large a range he loved, she thought it her policy to hold him by the tie of expectation.

This nobleman, now about forty years of age, and therefore a suitable match for Lady Jemima, was no other than Lord Surchester, who about eighteen years before, had professed a passion for Joanna Doveridge: he had pursued with steadiness the path of pleasure his youthful inclination had marked out for him, and was, now at the middle period of life, excepting some improvements in profligacy, just what he had been when the world's attraction and
his

his inexperience might have been pleaded in his behalf. He had a good person, an address that left no question of his superiority, and a mode of making love, that while it taught the object to conceive herself favored, told her also it was equally fruitless and dangerous to repel him.

Lady Jemima alone had the true art of governing this irresistible lover, who conquered by prepossession; and having for more than a year beheld him her captive, she had no doubt but a little more dexterity would rivet his fetters. Love was not in her nature; but it was now become convenient, if not necessary, that she should prevail on him to marry her; and to infuse into his head an idea of matrimony, which was to him a never-failing theme of ridicule, required the abilities of Lady Jemima Byram.

Full of this grand project, which she wished to see the event of ere she had

recourse to her brother, she arranged the few matters necessary to her quitting her abode; and feeling too heavily the degradation she was compelled to, to endure the mock condolences Lassiter's disposition to publish it drew from those who did not entirely shun her, she resolved on immediately betaking herself to England, but not to London, where her scanty purse and the certainty of meeting her *dear friend* Mrs. Haccombe and her *beloved* step-daughter Elizabeth, might prove inconvenient. She therefore fixed on Bath as her theatre, and, to her joy, found her lover well disposed to pursue her. Not being able to do better, she sent Miss Arabella *per force* to a mean, but cheap boarding school in Dublin; and taking with her only her own waiting woman and a favorite footman, she embarked for Parkgate, Lord Surcheester gallantly officiating as her escort.

CHAP. XIV.

As forwardest on the road, let us accompany poor Elizabeth, who now literally *seeking her fortune* as Peregrina La-morne, experienced from the kindness of Captain S. every alleviation her unpleasant journey admitted of. A genteel young woman was coming at the same time from Holyhead; and her destination being to within twenty miles of London, it was agreed that they should travel together post. Peregrina therefore escaped all the distresses of a stage coach and *strangers*; and she reached London in tolerable spirits.

Entering at Islington in an unusually bright February day, she was caught by the busy gaiety of the streets in her way to Devonshire place, where her letter of recommendation taught her, her new pa-

tronefs was to be found; but what was her furprife, when ſhe heard that the family were gone to Bath, and their return was uncertain! There ſeemed however ſome ground for conjecturing that Mrs. Haccombe might be at home the next day; but of Peregrina's coming, nobody ſeemed to have had warning. Captain S. almoſt as much at a loſs as his charge, aſked her if ſhe would remain at an inn till the next day. Her diſtreſs was more than ſhe could bear; and ſhe burſt into tears.

The maid-ſervant who had opened the door, ſeemed not ſolely deſtitute of compaſſion: ſhe offered to fetch the houſe-keeper; and the kindneſs being accepted, in hopes of farther information, a lady, full of importance, abundantly large, and ſupremely fine, made her appearance. To Captain S's enquiries ſhe answered, " Why Sir, our people is all gone down to Bath, and I expected as they would have been up again this week; but one of our men
was

was in town yesterday, and said my master talked of staying longer; but he thought as my mistress would not be for staying; so I think it very *likable*, she will be up to-morrow or a day or two; and as the young lady has a letter, and I know my mistress said *somefat* some time ago about *speeting* a young lady from Ireland; why if the young lady will walk in, I will do all I can to make it agreeable; for I have all the management of our house the same as my mistress."---With this encouragement, Captain S. advised Miss Lamorne to remain at Mrs. Haccombe's---he promised to see her daily, and left her in tears.

A fortnight however passed in daily expectation, notwithstanding the house-keeper had written to apprise her mistress of Miss Lamorne's arrival, and to request her orders; but Mrs. Haccombe was too deeply engaged, to attend to any one but herself. A titled family, her darling deities,

ties, had distinguished her by certain condescensions in accepting of some of her luxuries which their own narrow income would not allow them:---she had flattered them: they had cajoled her; and though they laughed at her in secret, and, stiffly attached to the right of pedigree, resolved not to know her in London, they convinced her of their friendship; and she was happy in being of use to them.

Their day was at last fixed for departing; and not at all to their satisfaction, Mrs. Haccombe politely named the same day for her journey, hoping that as their route was to London, she should not lose sight of them. To get rid of her, they pretended business which would draw them out of the great road; and Mrs. Haccombe, who in their manner felt herself slighted and affronted, must have travelled disconsolate and mortified, had not her spirits been raised, on the last morning of her intended stay, by hearing of the arrival of
 lady

lady Jemima Byram. She immediately sought her out, in hopes of shewing her quondam friends how easily she could repair their loss. With her she found, at a late breakfast, lord Surcheſter; and now her heart was doubly gratified by exhibiting her intimacy with a right honourable lady, and by trying her powers of fascination on an earl. The joy of meeting her *dear* lady Jemima was a ſufficient pretext for again delaying her journey; and the ſucceſs of a few evenings determined her not to quit Bath till ſhe had ſhaken her friend's empire in his lordſhip's heart.

Lady Jemima was not blind to her danger, nor was it poſſible for the rival ladies to conceal from each other what was paſſing in the mind of each. His lordſhip, ever fond of novelty, appeared not indifferent to the majeſtic perſon, the dark eyes, the unpowdered ringlets, and the morocco cheeks of Mrs Haccombe; and lady Jemima, in her extreme wiſdom,
found

found it impolitic to pursue her former plan of *expectation*. She exerted all her arts to rouse his dozing passion; he referred her to her own severity for his apology if he had appeared negligent: she stickled only for a promise of marriage; he unhesitatingly complied; and fame soon made free with the characters of the earl and the widow.

Gratitude without hope could not bind lord Surcheffer: his passion had begun to totter; and it soon took its *penchant* decidedly towards the alluring oriental charmer. The ladies came to an explanation: they quarrelled irremediably--their tongues could scarcely express their rage---but what were lady Jemima's feelings when Mrs. Haccombe left Bath, followed by the peer!

Mr. Haccombe had been absent from his wife during a part of her stay, which he had spent with a friend in Wiltshire.

On

On his return he heard a buzz of scandal; but matters were then so much in favor of Mrs. Haccombe, that it was not difficult to throw the whole blame on lady *Jemima*. She convinced him that she had been grossly insulted by a woman of no character; and in a pet recognising a duty in her cooler moments she seemed to have forgotten, she declared nothing should prevail on her to bestow a thought on the miss that was promised her, and whom she endeavoured to stigmatise as the disowned offspring of her ladyship.

Lord Surchefer was a man not easily awed by conjugal authority, or disappointed by jealousy; but in the mushroom acquaintance he had formed with Mr. Haccombe, he discovered that if ever caution was necessary in his amours, here it was indispensable; for Haccombe was one of those men who are fools in every thing but the promotion of their personal interests; and there the hawk is not

quicker sighted. His passion was aggrandisement and its consequent power. To gain his wealth he had lost no opportunity the east afforded: through oppression, fraud, speculation, and even murder, had he waded to be rich: some of his schemes had succeeded; many had failed; but at last he had returned home rich and wretched: to be alone was his greatest punishment: the approach of night ever dejected him, and was he at any time accidentally in the dark, he seemed to have the terrors of a child brought up in a nursery of hobgoblin legend. Finding bawling and sedition well paid for, he had bought a borough, and commenced democrat, and was now agape for a contract and a pecrage; but as his wife was one of the many machines he had made use of for rising from his original nothingness, it would not have suited his plans had she rendered herself inadmissible into polite circles: he therefore sedulously watched her flirting, and fancied, happy man! that

his

his vigilance had been always successful. He had no objection to her being admired; on the contrary, he felt proud, when some of those reptiles who courted his beams affected to envy him the possession of so *divine* a woman; and when Mrs. Haccombe's routs and Mrs. Haccombe's masquerade, her elegant decorations, and her Attic suppers were lauded by the public prints, he felt the dilation of pleasure, and threw her the other handful of money to buy popularity.

Let it not be supposed however, that Mr. Haccombe, jealous as he was of a Lucretian character for his Lucretia, entertained those rigid obsolete superstitions which awe the lower world. The mind that contemns authority generally contemns it in all its modifications; and whatever may be the specious sophistry of the present day, it is most frequently found that he who is a rebel to his lawful governor, is so to a far superior power. Mr.
Haccombe

Haccombe had been, in the early part of his life, a christian ; but christianity is an increase of luggage few bring back from the Indies: he had therefore suffered his religion to take a quiet nap ; and when returned to his native land, he found it so old fashioned, that he totally dismissed it from his use. The character of wit, which he never could obtain, was now he saw cheaply to be purchased by seasonable profaneness—a scripture quotation would excite a general laugh, and confute where he could not reason ; and to contend against revelation he found was the easiest argument, because the chat, the writings, the declamation of every day helped his genius.

Neither by nature nor habit virtuous, he knew no motive to decency of conduct but his worldly interest ; but still, as the constitution of government did not yet openly patronise depravity of manners, he thought the least evil was to be apprehended

hended from seeming morality: his vices consequently were private; but they were neither few nor venial; nor were they unsuspected by his lady, who winked very conveniently, as often as she made any discovery, and not unfrequently made use of it as a hidden prop to her authority over him.

CHAP.

CHAP. XV.

To such persons was the important conduct of a creature, young, beautiful, helpless, friendless, and inexperienced, intrusted by one who hated her for her merits, and dreaded her innocence, and who, had the sanguinary fashions of past centuries still existed, would perhaps, not have scrupled to remove her by any secret means.

Mrs. Haccombe reached town with dispositions not at all favorable to her new guest; but rather less apparently unkind. In her *tete-à-tete* with her husband during the journey, she had discovered, that nothing but a tub thrown to the whale would secure her in her machinations against him; and it having occurred to her that if Miss Lamorne possessed any charms of person, she might be useful to her, her asperity

asperity towards her was somewhat softened.

While Captain S. remained in town, Peregrina was far from comfortless. She was treated by Mrs. Haccombe's vice-queen, with all that studious respect which could redound to her own credit; and Captain S. devoted some hours, when he could, in shewing her the common curiosities of the metropolis. She found inexhaustible entertainment in the new world she was introduced to, and feeling herself repaid for all her difficulties and distresses, by the apparent grandeur of those she was placed with, and by the fine shops and the shewy passengers that filled the streets, she endeavoured to forget the past, and to be satisfied with a situation that allowed her to see the world, even if she stooped to gaze on it.

But, in five days, Captain S. was forced to leave London, and she had then no other

other resource but what the house and its windows afforded her. She had access to a splendid piano forte, and to a fashionable collection of books, some of which were *not* of wood; and between these and the coaches and the phaëtons, that from two till five wheeled about the street, she passed her time, not chusing to attempt any public amusement till Mrs. Haccombe should come to town.

At length, when least expected, she *did* come, about an hour and half before midnight, and when Peregrina was preparing to go to bed. Being apprised of this welcome yet dreaded arrival, she put herself again in order, and went down to the dining parlour, where she found Mr. Haccombe busied in opening letters, and his lady stretched upon a sofa with her head towards the door. At Peregrina's request, the housekeeper announced her; Mr. Haccombe raised his tawny eyes and bilious countenance at the mention of her name—

name---he bowed civilly and echoed her name to awaken the attention of Mrs. Haccombe, who had drowned every exterior sound in a deep yawn---she was at the trouble of turning her head; and saying only, "Well child, I supposed you would be here, but I could not come sooner; I am too much tired to speak to you to night, let me see you at breakfast to-morrow," she dismissed her to her repose.

At breakfast, therefore, Miss Lamorne waited on her patroness, who, in the style of despotic request she had learnt in the east, signified her pleasure that she should make the tea.

What Peregrina had conceived of the family magnificence from the sight of the house, with which the housekeeper had treated her, accorded well with the personal specimen Mrs. Haccombe gave her. She had risen at a late hour and had languished from her chamber to an adjoining breakfast-

breakfast-room, where stood a table glittering with silver and gilded china. She herself was a bale of the finest muslin worked with the most astonishing beauty, and trimmed in all the profusion of uncounted wealth, with the most costly lace. Peregrina met with a reception far from encouraging to her timidity; for the first evolution was the application to her eye, of a glass set round with diamonds, with which she scrutinized her dependent's modest figure. She then bid her come forward, and still inspecting, she told her that she had met with lady Jemima at Bath, that she believed her to be an exceeding bad woman, and that she was not certain it would be consistent with her own character, to have any thing to do with a person recommended by her.—Peregrina astonished, expressed her surprise and sorrow in inoffensive terms, which Mrs. Hacombe interrupted, by bluntly telling her, that she was not quite determined what she should do with her, that it depended in a
great

great measure on her good conduct, whether she should use her interest to get *her out to India*, or send her back to lady Je-
mima.

Peregrina was in the act of obeying Mrs. Haccombe's orders to prepare the breakfast, and had the silver caddy in her hand, when, astonished at the deception that had been used to entrap her, her fingers lost their retentive powers, and she let the caddy fall on the splendid cups and saucers, to the damage of the three that were placed on the board. She sunk into the chair behind her, in a state almost of stupefaction, while Mrs. Haccombe, whom the clatter had irritated and the loss provoked, raved with all the fury of a *naiad*, and hesitating at no words, though ever so uncouth from female lips, vented her rage as long as her powers lasted. She rang the bell, forgetful of her habitual language, and exhibiting to the livery servants, the mischief that careless creature had done to
her

her cypher china, which she prized above all her other sets, she ordered her from her presence; but Peregrina had anticipated her commands, and staggering with agitation and faintness, had gained the stairs, where bursting into a flood of tears, she seated herself.

From an adjoining room Mr. Hacombe, unconscious of what was passing, issued. He too kenned his new guest with his optic assistant, and surprised at her situation, would have accosted her; but too much distressed to return civilities she only curtsied, and ascending the stairs gained her own room, which she paced all the remainder of the morning, too deeply hurt to feel fatigue, without hearing any thing of the family below.

She was greatly distressed at the mischief she had inadvertently occasioned; but the greater injury offered to herself, absorbed in a considerable degree that regret. She
saw

saw herself the dupe of lady Jemima, whom she could no longer consider as her friend: she knew not the persons with whom she was placed; but from Mrs. Haccombe's being employed to deceive her, and from the vehement language she had in her anger, made use of, no very favourable surmises were to be drawn. Whither, should she find it necessary to remove, was she to betake herself? To trust lady Jemima was impossible: she saw too plainly, that her only aim was to get rid of her; and now every smothered suspicion of her hostile disposition acquiring new force, she saw that her whole conduct to her had been cruel. Was it possible to make a friend of Mrs. Haccombe?—her present anger was against all hope; but it was not improbable that she herself was deceived by lady Jemima, and might imagine she was conferring a favor when she was forwarding her going out to India. From the unguarded manner in which she had mentioned it, this might be presumed, and
from

from the terms in which she had spoken of lady Jemima, it was evident, that she had forfeited her good opinion.

Seeing no one she could cleave to, but those on whom she was cast; and judging by herself, that the tale she had to tell, must move their compassion, she thought how she might appease Mrs. Hacombe's anger for the loss of her china.

She first sent to beg an audience of the house-keeper, who, with a message of compliments, excused herself by excess of business from waiting on her, but begged to see her in her parlour. Peregrina crept down, but when near the bottom of the stairs, Mr. Hacombe popped out from a back parlour with his spectacles on: these he placed on his forehead, as now impediments to his *views*, and taking advantage of Peregrina's surprise, which had stopped her, he politely enquired after her, and expressed his fear that she was ill,
when

when he had before met her. In an unsteady voice she returned him thanks, and said, "she had been much distressed in the morning." "What," said he, smiling, "about the china---I suppose."

"Yes, Sir, I was so unfortunate as to do irreparable mischief; but indeed it was owing to my being very much alarmed."

"O no, no, my dear madam---it is far from irreparable mischief---I have agents in the factories that can procure me any thing; and if my wife has set her heart on that china, she knows she may easily have another set. I warrant you, Miss Lamorne, money can purchase any thing, and I never regard expence."

"Might I then hope, Sir," said Peregrina, most innocently, most unsuspectingly, "that you would have the goodness to interest yourself for me with Mrs. Haccombe? She is, I fear, extremely angry with
with

with me ; and indeed, I am so wretched, that if I do not find friends here, I know not where to seek them---for lady Jemima has deceived me, most cruelly deceived me."

Her last words were accompanied by such evidences of distress, as would have excited compassion in a heart less open to female fascination than the nabob's. He begged Miss Lamorne to walk into the parlour he had come from ; and there seating her at a due distance from himself, and having rung for his man, that he might tell him he was not at home to any body, he professed himself extremely concerned at what he had just heard ; and laying one foot across the other, while with his hand he ironed his glossy silk stocking, in exact time with his words, he hesitating, stammering, repeating, amending, and beginning over and over again, with an emphatical *I say*, requested to know what was her situation.

It was of no more than a wish to be rid of her, that Peregrina suspected Lady Jemima. Of the truth of any thing she had asserted, she made no question, or she might have doubted whether Sir Clifford had been as cruel as he was reported; but Lady Jemima seemed to suffer equally with herself, under the moroseness of his temper; and conceiving that an illegitimate branch of the family *must* be an offence to him, she acquiesced implicitly in the resentment she was told he bore her, and in the injunction imposed on her, never to reveal her relation to him. It was not therefore her intention to make Mr. Haccombe her confidant: she only meant, as Peregrina Lamorne, to make him her mediator with Mrs. Haccombe, and if possible her defence against the abhorred exportation to the East Indies. Had he been young and unmarried, her native delicacy might have made her cautious and reserved, though then, brought up as she had been, who could say she would have distrusted

professions of friendship? But here was no room for innocence and ignorance to doubt; for he was of a very sober age, and married—two circumstances that insured his integrity—the natural fear of doing wrong, which Peregrina supposed every body felt, out of the question.—Besides, in her whole life, Peregrina had never been told she was handsome—she was not at all inclined to be out of humor with her own person, it is true: she thought it what every body's was at her age, except where accidentally the hand of nature had failed, or where labor and poverty counteracted her. Her half sister, the elder Miss Byram, she pitied as singularly unfortunate in her person; but Lady Jemima herself bore all the indications of former beauty: the young woman she had travelled with was pretty: all the ladies she had seen in the carriages she had gazed at, appeared to her handsome, and with complexions far superior to her own; and Mrs. Haccombe, though she did not quite

approve

approve her voluminous fat, was undoubtedly still a very fine woman.

Kept therefore ignorant of her own powers, and the weakness of others; inclined to believe whatever was seriously told her, and supposing all the world infinitely better than herself, she was fitted to become its dupe. She had indeed read of fraud, villany, and passion; but how difficult is it to apply the experience of books to the living world!—She had no confidence in her own judgment, no distrust in her nature, no guile in her heart, no hypocrisy on her tongue, and therefore no caution.

On a repetition of Mr. Haccombe's question, which was conveyed in a tone of soothing tenderness and parental interest, she told him that she had parted from Lady Jemima under the fullest assurance that she should not be sent to India, for which she had an unconquer-

able aversion; that she had not the smallest objection to making the accomplishments she had gained serviceable to her maintenance, and would therefore very gladly engage in any situation proper for her, if Mrs. Haccombe would, as Lady Jemima assured her she could, find such a one for her.—That it was the alarm of hearing from Mrs. Haccombe that her going to India had been thought of, that had occasioned the accident she had so much cause to lament; and she very much feared, unless some one had the goodness to interpose for her, that Mrs. Haccombe was irreconcilably offended.

CHAP. XVI.

THE nabob heard with attention; and when his fair client paused, gave her all the encouragement that re-echoing her sentiments with a thousand *to-be-sures* and *certainlies* could afford her: he agreed, that being compelled to do what is *against* one's inclination must be *very inimical* to one's feelings; and, that, to be sure, if Lady Jemima had made a promise that she should not go out to India, why a *promise was a promise*, and every body certainly *ought, and was bound by that promise, to make good that promise*. After a long harangue, from which Peregrina clearly understood that Lady Jemima had imposed, not only on herself but on Mrs. Haccombe, and that her ladyship, whatever might be her estimation in Ireland, was very slightly regarded on this side the water, Mr. Haccombe afforded her all the relief she could wish

wish for, in pledging himself for his lady's ample forgiveness, and for her giving up all thoughts of furthering lady Jemima's plan, the moment she should know it had not the sanction of Miss Lamorne's approbation. He said, that as to her going out into the world to make the most of her talents, it was time enough to think of that measure; that she was at present too young, and too little acquainted with the world to make it an eligible plan; but that, till it was her own choice to depart, his house was her home; and that as she saw he had no family, he should be extremely flattered by the honor of being allowed to adopt her for his daughter. He was growing still more eloquent in praise of every virtue that could gain confidence, and Peregrina's heart was dilated with gratitude when the echoing hall announced Mrs. Haccombe's return from her morning's drive---he advised the young lady to retire, and promised to use his influence with his wife immediately.

He

He was as good as his word, and Mrs. Haccombe having just before, *entirely by accident*, met lord Surcheſter in Hyde Park, ſhe was in very good cue for making confeſſions: ſhe proteſted ſhe was not angry about the china; ſhe did not wiſh to ſend Miſs Lamorne even out of the houſe--- ſhe was extremely welcome to remain there as long as ſhe pleaſed; and lord Surcheſter, *whom ſhe had juſt had a glimpe of*, had promiſed to dine with them.

Mrs. Haccombe then lounged up ſtairs to her dreſſing room, and at her huſband's requeſt, which ſhe was wonderfully ready to comply with, ſhe ſent to deſire Miſs Lamorne's company. Peregrina obeyed, not without ſome fear, which was however ſoon diſpelled; for Mrs. Haccombe politely begged her to think no more of the accident that had happened in the morning; and expreſſing her ſurpriſe at the duplicity of lady Jemima, ſhe aſſured her of her friendſhip and protection, and
declared

declared herself happy in an opportunity of disappointing the unkindness projected against her---not that there was, she observed, any thing severe or unjustifiable in her ladyship's plan of fitting her out for the Indies:—it was a very respectable situation, and such as young women, not only of genteel birth, but of distinguished rank, had gladly accepted—nothing could be said against it by any body who knew the world; but if Miss Lamorne preferred private life *in a low station*, she certainly had a right to chuse for herself. Peregrina was then dismissed with a civil hope that she would appear in good spirits at eight o'clock when they were to dine. She then retired to her own apartment, from whence she wrote a note to Mr. Haccombe returning him her acknowledgments for his kind interference, and then resuming her delightful ideas of grandeur and gaiety, she made herself as smart as she could in her mourning, to appear at the dinner table, Mrs. Hac-

combe's

combe's chamber-maid attending and assisting her.

Enquiring of the servant where she should find the family, she was directed to the front drawing room, and a footman who waited at the door of it, gave her admission. Her expectations were formed to meet only the master and mistress of the house; but the party consisted of themselves and three other persons, two of whom were gentlemen, the other a lady. The sight of *strangers*, though not quite so abhorrent to Peregrina's mind as it had been, drew her attention from the glaring glitter of the illuminated apartment, while Mr. Haccombe by name introduced her to the elder of the two gentlemen and to the lady. The younger man sat at a distance, and seemed unnoticed. Mrs. Haccombe *wrapt up* rather than *drest* in a gold muslin, was, as usual, on the sofa near a good fire. At her feet sat the stranger lady, whose name

Peregrina caught as Mrs. Barnby. She seemed to be about twenty-two years of age, *embonpoint* as to her person, and strikingly beautiful in features and complexion. The finest white and red, that could be bought at Bayley's or at Warren's, were blended on her glowing cheeks; and her dark eyes, fringed by the most ornamental eye lashes, and arched by eyebrows, not trusted to the careless hand of nature, set off to the utmost advantage her blooming hue; a very fine set of teeth, well displayed by lips of the deepest carnation, completed her claim to the praise of extraordinary beauty, which really dazzled too forcibly to admit that criticism which might have detected many imperfections, had art been less sedulous in assisting nature. Drest in satin and lace, and decorated by a multitude of feathers, Mrs. Barnby appeared to Peregrina as a person of no small consequence; and left to herself, she would perhaps have guessed her to have been at least a duchess.

Her

Her entrance had interrupted a conversation between Mr. Haccombe and the elder gentleman, who was lord Surchester. It was resumed on her taking a chair; and she heard the unintelligible sentences---“ Well, my dear sir, if you wish for a good thing under government, it is indisputably in my power—contracts to be sure are the thing at present—the minister dares not refuse me—they know I have six votes under my thumb---so, my dear sir, you have only to say what you will have---that is vacant---you understand me---and you may depend on my best services.”---An acknowledgment of obligation from the nabob--the moiety of a bow---and a hearty squeeze by the hand---followed these professions; and business being dispatched, the conversation became more general.

The young man who was sitting against the farther side of the room, under one of the lights, had, on Peregrina's entrance,
dropt

dropt his book, as if disturbed in his sleep. He seemed of a middle height, very dark complexion, and very thin visage: he was drest in deep mourning, and appeared either very ill, or very melancholy. Having picked up his book, he was pursuing his studies, when Mrs. Barnby having walked towards a glass near him to improve the exhibition of her ear-rings, bursting out into a laugh, exclaimed "Good God! why Edward is reading his book backwards: the laugh was general, with the exception only of Peregrina, who was very much struck with the oddity of his manners, and still more when, raising a countenance that might have been fine, but was now somewhat ghastly, he asked in a deep sonorous tone of voice "whether the way in which he held the book, made any alteration in the book itself---Is not the science as profound, are not the arguments as cogent," said he, "let me turn the book which way I please---what difference then can it make? and since free will is allowed to all

all mankind, and the grand scheme of providence cannot be fulfilled without free agency, why I am not entitled to read a book, which you must recollect too is mine by the compact of fair purchase, which way I will, is an exception from the general nature of things, that you cannot, I think, maintain on any ground."

"Do not answer him, Lucy," said Mr. Hacombe---"you see---you see he is in one of his moods, not to be talked to."

"I think then he would have done much better to have kept out of the way," said the lady of the house, poutingly.

"Why I do keep out of everybody's way, madam," replied the young man, "I am sure nobody can say I occupy an inch more than my share---you know, mamma, at your grand galas you always allow us eighteen inches of place, whatever we may have for supper."

Peregrina

Peregrina could scarcely forbear laughing at the calfish simplicity this sentence was uttered with ; but Mrs. Haccombe provoked, asked him how often she was to desire him not to call her *mamma*.

“ I shall do better when I am weaned, mamma,” he replied, with provoking *nai-veté*, “ old dad has promised me I shall go soon to Marybone charity school, to learn my letters again ; for I think I have forgot some of them---do you know” said he, turning to lord Surcheester, and grinning violently at him, “---yes, I dare say you do know, for you are a lord I am told ; and I suppose all lords can read---I count over the letters every morning, and I never can make them twice alike---and indeed I do not believe any two people could reckon them alike.---Now you see for example, a dead man would leave out the B---a blind man would leave out the C---a negro would leave out I---a poor man would leave out O---an actor would

would think of nothing but Q---the Twinnings, where mamma deals, know no letter but T---a quaker never heard of U---and a fine lady cannot frame her mouth to say W."

All this was unintelligible to Peregrina. Lord Surcheester affected to laugh: Mr. Haccombe attempted without effect to stop the young man's tongue; Mrs. Haccombe requested him for Heaven's sake to be quiet, while Mrs. Barnby gaped for an opportunity of rendering him more ridiculous.

Dinner was soon announced; and the black gentleman without the smallest attention to politeness, went first, and had seated and helped himself, when the last of the party had gained the table. Mr. Haccombe said only, "Edward, you should not do so"—"Nay," answered Edward, "self preservation, old dad, is the first law of nature: I knew you would be half an hour

hour complimenting about precedence; so I thought I would settle my own; beside, Sir," added he sternly, "who is there here, excepting indeed this magnifico my lord, that has any right to go before me. As for that miss there"---said he, looking at her, as she was seating herself opposite to him---he started from his chair, clasped his hands together, and crying out "Aye, indeed---good God!---were you ever---?" He dropped his knife, turned paler than before, and was carried out of the room to all appearance in a fit.

Peregrina was too much terrified to preserve her external composure, and gladly would she have left the table; but the rest of the party shewed no symptoms of alarm: lord Surcheester, as a stranger to the family, enquired into the situation of the young gentleman; Mrs. Haccombe answered only by wishing they were fairly rid of him; but Mr. Haccombe more temperately replied, "that he was the son of
a very

a very old friend of his, and was himself Sir Edward Bergholt, that he was heir to an estate of nearly eight thousand a year, which, till he was of age, which would not be till he had finished his twenty-fifth year, he had the troublesome charge of, as his guardian; that he had at one time possessed a very sound and highly improved understanding; but that a violent fever had, a short time before, reduced him to a state nearly approaching to idiocy if not insanity."

It was impossible for Peregrina's unsophisticated heart to recover its cheerfulness quickly, after she had seen a fellow creature suffer so severely under one of the greatest of human afflictions:---it dwelt on her mind during dinner, notwithstanding the novelty of all around her, and the civilities she received from the gentlemen; and she longed eagerly to hear more of Sir Edward Bergholt, who returned no more to them.

The

The ladies retired in due time to the drawing-room, where to the surprise of Peregrina, Sir Edward was pacing backward and forward in deep thought. She felt almost afraid of him; but the ladies by their unconcern diminished her fear, which was soon relieved by his dashing out of the apartment, in obedience to a rough hint of Mrs. Haccombe's, that he had better go elsewhere.

A yawning conversation now began between Mrs. Haccombe and Mrs. Barnby, from which Peregrina learnt that the latter was niece to Mr. Haccombe, and very much the humble servant of his lady. She was not at all deficient in her attention to their new guest; and she appeared so good natured, that Peregrina felt comforted by learning from some orders given, that she was to take up her residence, at least for a time, in Devonshire-Place.

Tea was brought: the gentlemen were summoned; and Mrs. Haccombe seemed not

not pleased at their long delay. Candor will it is hoped conclude that it was the absence of her husband, not of the peer, that she lamented—Peregrina did not dare offer to undertake the tea-table, remembering too sorely the disaster of the morning; but Mrs. Haccombe, as if it had been totally erased from her memory, bid her take her place. She obeyed, with a look of gratitude for the order, and nothing occurred to distress her.—Mrs. Haccombe, in something like a pet, had commanded the tea equipage away, when the gentlemen entered, concluding a conversation as the door was shut.

CHAP.

CHAP. XVII.

BEHOLD Elizabeth Byram, now as Peregrina Lamorne, in a situation totally new to her, seated between one of the Magi, and one of the peers of Great Britain, each a candidate for her favor; for Mr. Haccombe had been completely captivated in the morning conference; and lord Surcheſter, ever on the gape for novelty, had made due uſe of his eyes at the dinner-table. Rather encouraged than awed by the attention paid her, Peregrina answered with ſelf-poſſeſſion and charming modeſty all their queries and good wiſhes—ſhe felt no reluctance in confeſſing her total ignorance of the world, and confequently of many things familiar to its inhabitants: Mr. Haccombe appeared to promiſe himſelf much pleaſure in introducing her to the ſplendid entertainments of London: the peer, in a half whiſper, affected

affected to envy the atmosphere the felicity of her breathing it. Mrs. Haccombe fanned herself poutingly, complained of the heat of the room, and begged the door might be opened, while Mrs. Barnby, who thought exactly of the heat of the room as her aunt did, though when the door was open she shivered, remained a domino character, till on a sudden the insane baronet entered, and without noticing any one, desired to have some tea.

“How do you do? Edward,” said Mr. Haccombe.

“Better—I have been thinking; and you know I am always the better for that.”

“Nay,” says Mrs. Haccombe, “in my opinion you are always the worse for that, and every thing else.”

“No, no,” said he, with an arch leer—
“I am sure I shall be better now—I have
it

it all before me ; but I shall be very cautious—fight them all off, and then hang every one in his own noose. Ah, old dad,” said he, clapping Mr. Haccombe violently on the knee, “ I have it all before me ; and you shall be one of them, I assure you.”

His guardian, in an authoritative tone desired him to be more moderate—he obeyed ; and drank his tea in violence, now and then glancing a look at Peregrina, but not attempting to explain his interrupted sentence. She felt so afraid of him, that she almost dreaded the office of pouring out his tea for him ; but he remained perfectly quiet.

A whist-table was set, and Peregrina was of course expected to join. As the party was so small, and it was not to be expected that Sir Edward could make one, she felt extremely hurt at her own ignorance, which compelled her to say, that she not only
knew

knew not the game, but had never in her life played a card.

"You can *play*, I have no doubt," said Mr. Haccombe, stooping to a level with her eyes, "in a manner that would be much more gratifying than with a handful of paper."

"How is that? Sir," said she, recoiling for want of comprehension.

"Why, give us a little music," said he; "I dare say that is in the number of your accomplishments."

"I would willingly Sir, but here is no instrument."

"Do you not sing?"

"Yes; but very poorly, without an instrument."

O, that you shall have---Lucy, where is your harp?---I have not seen it this age."

"My aunt's piano would be better," said Mrs. Barnby. As for the harp I never practice---so I suppose it is not in order."

"I have taken the liberty of practising a little on it," said Peregrina; "and it is not in bad condition."

The harp was fetched, and Peregrina, for the first time in her life, sat down to entertain a circle, which was just large enough to be formidable; for had it consisted of more persons, her *bearers* might have been fewer. She, however, considered it as a duty of gratitude to exert herself when requested, and accustomed as she had been from her infancy to music, she had none of the distrusts of ignorance---she had not learnt to be afraid---in short, she did not know that what she undertook was difficult, and happily for her, she got
3 through

through a song of some execution, and great merit, to the satisfaction of all; for Sir Edward, when her harp came, had withdrawn; Mrs. Haccombe had entered into deep conversation with the peer, who lent an ear to her, and an eye to Peregrina; and Mrs. Barnby had fallen fast asleep.

After three or four calls on her voice, Mrs. Haccombe again proposed cards, perhaps, as the more certain means of keeping his lordship's roving eyes fixed, at least on a neutral object. The party seated themselves, and Peregrina took a chair by her encouraging friend, Mrs. Barnby, and endeavoured to get some insight into the game; but she could make nothing of it. Before the first game was out, Sir Edward again made his appearance: he stood sometimes by Mrs. Haccombe, and sometimes by lord Surcheester, and abruptly said to the latter, "Why, both you, Mr. Peer, and my mamma, play your game very ill -- you don't finesse enough, my old boy."

Mr. Haccombe asked him to sit down and be quiet. "Not I," said he, capering across the room---"here's nobody but this queer Miss to talk to; and I don't like her. I am afraid of her; for she looks so like a great monstrous she-centaur I once met upon the road." He then gave a frightful scream, and bounced out of the room.

"Is Sir Edward always so terrifying?" said Peregrina, to Mrs. Barnby, who was dealing.

"O no," said she, with a deep sigh, "he is sometimes very rational; but I assure you he never does any harm at any time—he is only very tiresome. We hope he will come to himself again."

The rubber concluded against lord Surchester and Mrs. Haccombe, who had been partners; and she seemed much displeased---they had scored with gold---they paid

paid in gold; and Peregrina, to her astonishment, saw a sum equal to all she possessed in the world, paid by each of the losers, for half an hour's amusement.

Lord Surcheſter pleading another engagement went away, having made an agreement with Mr. Haccombe to attend him the next day but one, to ſome great man; and Mrs. Haccombe complaining of fatigue, ordered ſupper to be haſtened. Mrs. Barnby asked Peregrina if it would be agreeable to her to ſpend ſome part of the next morning in ſhopping, to which ſhe readily aſſented, though almoſt ignorant what the term meant, but ſhe gueſſed it was pleaſure; and ſhe was well diſpoſed to be pleaſed.

Having ſat up till paſt twelve the preceding night, and been kept waking by the wonders ſhe had ſeen, Peregrina ſlept late in the morning, and was obliged to haſten her dreſs to be ready for breakfast;

L 2

but

but Mrs. Haccombe not having then made her appearance, she was going to improve the time at the piano forte, when Mrs. Barnby joined her and engaged her in gossip which beguiled her; it is true, of her leisure, but served to increase her favourable opinion of this condescending friend, who promised most liberally to give her every instruction she could stand in need of, and to be her constant resource in all difficulties. “Ah, my dear Miss Lamorne,” said she, taking her hand and sighing deeply, “in your situation it is easy to advise; but in mine it requires a great deal of prudence to find out what is best. You do not know how I am distressed,” added she, with a look that signified her wish to be asked; but Peregrina, who was fearful of intruding, suffered her to use her pleasure, her eyes only expressing the interest she took in every one’s distress.

“Shall I tell you my story?” said Mrs. Barnby, “it is a melancholy one, I assure you;

you ; and you must, on your life, promise never to divulge it. I am certain you would not. I am sure I may trust you."

"No, do not, madam," interrupted the trembling girl---"I scarcely know myself whether I am to be trusted---I am young and very ignorant, and you may repent your confidence; for I fear, though I would not for the world break my promise, yet if any body were cunningly to set about extorting a secret from me, I fear I have not prudence enough to keep it. I have always found myself sadly deficient whenever prudence was necessary."

"Well, my dear girl," said Mrs. Barnby, patting her rosy cheek, "you are a good creature, and I am sure would do nobody any harm---only promise me not to tell what I shall tell you."

"I will promise upon my honour, madam, not willingly to reveal it."

“ That is enough, my dear, I will trust you. You understand, I suppose, that Mr. Hacombe is my uncle, and a very kind uncle he has been to me. I was married, when quite a child, to Mr. Barnby, a man many years older than myself, and whom I never loved, but I did it out of duty to my parents:——he has been dead a little more than a twelvemonth, so that, just when I came of age, I was a widow. My uncle and aunt took me home to them; and here I found Sir Edward Bergholt, who was then quite in his right senses. He became attached to me; and I cannot say I was indifferent to him: my excellent uncle discovered it, and told us, that as I was his niece, and Sir Edward's inferior in fortune, and that as Sir Edward was his ward, and obliged, unless he would forfeit all his estate to an hospital, to marry with his concurrence before he was five and twenty, he thought he should not be acting the part of an honest man, should he suffer him to attach himself to one of his

his guardian's family, who must be so much benefited by his estate: he therefore forbid our union. It was this disappointment that deranged poor Edward, who is only kept within bounds by my being in the house, though he never seems to take much notice of me. We hope for his recovery; and did I not know my uncle's high spirit and excessive disinterestedness, I should flatter myself, that the having seen how poor Edward has suffered, might prevail on him; but I cannot hope it, though I know he would do any thing in his power for me; for he is one of the best men in the world."

Peregrina expressed, in unaffected language, her sincere concern for Mrs. Barnby's situation, and the sense of her own happiness, in being placed under the protection of so excellent a man as Mr. Haccombe. "I am sure," said Mrs. Barnby, wiping her eyes, "my dear Miss Larmorne, *you* may reckon on him as a friend
---he

---he will be a father to you; for you have won his heart by your amiable deportment---indeed we are all quite in love with you. Never, I charge you, have any scruples with my uncle if he offers you kindnesses;---for you cannot do him a greater favour than putting it in his power to oblige you; and to slight his kindness is to affront him."

The entrance of a servant put an end to this interesting conversation. Mrs. Barnby affectionately shook Peregrina's hand; and the family soon after dropped in.

At breakfast the play was proposed for the evening's amusement, and Peregrina's heart bounded with joy, at the prospect of having, realized to her sight, those scenes she had often read with rapture. The play was Lear; and her expectations, though scarcely knowing how to form themselves, gave the idea of supreme felicity on hearing it. She secretly thanked
 lady

lady Jemima for casting her out upon the world, since it afforded her an opportunity of seeing a play, and had secured to her such friends as Mr. Haccombe and Mrs. Barnby!

When their morning was adjusting, Mrs. Barnby asked Mrs. Haccombe to accompany them in their trading circuit; but she was disposed to ride on horseback ---how lord Surcheester was engaged was not generally known. Sir Edward, who was present, and had behaved wonderfully well, as if he understood that Mrs. Haccombe's not going with them was an inconvenience, elected himself into their number. Mrs. Barnby, with a look of softness, accepted this as a civility, but Peregrina, lest the baronet should again break out into his eccentricities, heartily wished he had been less attentive.

The splendid coach, with two beaus for footmen, was ready as soon as Peregrina

L 5

had

had finished her noon toilet ; for the appearance she had been used to make, was now far from satisfying her ; and she feared, not a little, that she should disgrace dear Mrs. Barnby. With a blush on her cheeks that arose from anxious haste, she skipped down to the drawing-room, where she found only Sir Edward. Seeing no one to protect her against his oddities, she was retreating, when he called to her by the style of *Miss* : she was afraid of provoking him, and therefore stopt. Coming up to her, and staring full in her face, in a deep voice, he cried out, " What do you too paint your cheeks ? O, I am glad of it---it will do me good---O you cannot think what good it will do me---it will quite please me, I assure you"---he was coming still nearer her, when obeying only her fears, she screamed, and was near falling against the door. He changed his countenance, and saying, very gravely and rationally, " I beg your pardon---you have heard, I dare say, of my infirmity, and
will

will forgive it"---he took her hand and led her to a chair at the bottom of the room, himself standing in the recess of the window nearest to her; he spoke not another word, but seemed in deep thought of the most melancholy kind. He then, as if desirous of making Peregrina speak, talked not absurdly of the weather; but just as she heard Mrs. Barnby coming down stairs, he was beginning to launch forth into nonsense, and glad she was to see her enter the room.

CHAP.

CHAP. XVIII.

THEY all sallied out together on the morning business; and Peregrina soon forgot, in the surrounding novelties, her fear of Sir Edward, and his odd speech to her. To the most fashionable linen-draper's in Bond-street, Mrs. Barnby first directed her course; and here her young friend was delighted with an infinite variety of the most tempting manufactures, and an assemblage of morning beauties, to whom Mrs. Barnby introduced her:---among these were Lady Kerbell and her two elegant daughters, whose highly fashionable and perfectly easy manners made Peregrina feel, as it is the good breeding of great ladies to make little ones feel, very insignificant. Lady Grace Moray, the eldest of these young ladies, seeing Sir Edward, immediately linked her arm within his, and stalking with him at a rate he was not

not disposed to keep up with, to the farthest part of the shop, she there seated herself on the counter with a genteel spring, and holding him fast by his coat, began to talk to him in a cruel style of childish banter, which he bore with more patience than Peregrina had expected. Her ladyship's attention was called off from him to look at the most beautiful muslin, and the greatest bargain ever seen---it was a muslin embroidered in colored silks, the ill-paid work of some needy young woman! and which at a profit of about two hundred per cent. was now offered to this daughter of prodigality; but the lady was tall above the middle size; and there being a doubt of the length, after she had accepted it, and ordered it to be set down to her, she bid Sir Edward hold it against her shoulder to see if it would do: he obeyed; but in obeying her, he either mischievously or inadvertently, walked completely thro' the beautiful muslin. Lady Grace colored, and was beginning to scold, when Lady Susan

Susan, her sister, coming up to her, and running her hand through the rent, with a violent laugh, and something akin to an oath, protested she deserved it for setting Edward to measure it---“Well,” said Lady Grace, pouting, “the man must take it again, for I cannot think of having it now.” “No, indeed, my lady,” replied the shopkeeper, bowing very low, “the muslin, before it was worked, cost me more than I offered it your ladyship at; and I cannot take it again.” “Here, Edward,” cried Lady Susan, beckoning him; “come, you must make Grace a present of this muslin: come, we all know you are very rich and spend nothing---come; will it pay for it now, dear? or will it draw upon guardian.” “Neither,” replied Sir Edward, with folded arms and a sneer of contempt---“what money I have to spare I will lay out in bronze for your ladyship’s complexion; for I think your face wants an additional covering over its two coats of white lead and rouge.” Lady Susan would have
laughed;

laughed; but she was too much mortified to command her features, while Lady Grace, who forgot her recent vexation in the pleasure of seeing herself revenged on her sister, dropped the tattered muslin and the subject, to repeat Sir Edward's sarcasm. All was now laugh, but would soon have been malice, had not Lady Kerbell, with the utmost indulgence, interposed, by ordering the muslin to be set down to her. The matter was then adjusted; and Peregrina was in raptures at the goodness of the countess, little suspecting that the tradesman had now a worse chance than ever of getting his money--- he sighed as he bowed, in gratitude for the favour; and the ladies retreated to their carriage, leaving Peregrina not able to comprehend how such fine ladies could have such coarse manners; but she soon solved all doubt by recollecting how little she knew of *life*.

Large

Large sums of money had been talked of; and expensive goods had been placed before her eyes, till guineas appeared shillings, and moderate muslins hop-sacks.—Mrs. Barnby suffered nothing to be removed till she had politely offered it to Miss Lamorne's notice; and she, ashamed of buying nothing, suffered herself to be tempted by a *very delicate, most charming, and uncommonly cheap little* sprigged muslin, *which would make the nicest second-mourning dress in the world.* It dipped pretty deep into her third guinea; but the temptation was irresistible—it was the first purchase she had ever made; and she was in Paradise.

Sir Edward, who had sat on a stool, thumping the ground with one of the shop measures, when he saw she too had purchased, with a sneering contraction of his features, asked her if she too *bought tinder.* She made him no answer: Mrs. Barnby ordered her goods to be sent immediately,

for *she should die to see* them at home; and they set forward to a haberdasher's, where pretty nearly the same folly of buying, though not of *rending* was played over again; but Peregrina could spare here only a few shillings for a simple head ornament.

A warehouse, where dresses hung up by scores, inviting arms, and where sizes were fitted by guesses and coaxed in by dint of tugging, with the prevailing assurance that they all *sat like wax*; next drew Mrs. Barnby's attention.—Here she bought *in esse* what she had before bargained for *in potentiâ*, and she was delighted with her bargains, which called forth all Sir Edward's asperity.—Nothing here was at all within the reach of Miss Lamorne's pocket; and she carried about three and forty shillings home.

Dressing anew for the evening's engagement occupied all the space before dinner,

ner, which was order'd at an early hour. Mrs. Haccombe made her appearance at the head of the table in her morning dress, and in a state of more than usual languor: she complained of a head-ach and universal ailment, which she said would not admit of her going to the play; but she strenuously rejected the polite offer of Mrs. Barnby, and the more sincere earnestness of Peregrina to share her solitude, and they left her alone; not long indeed to remain so; for lord Surchester had called in the morning, and she had not failed to tell him that the family were engaged to the play, and that she should not go.

In the long drive from Devonshire-place to Drury-lane, Mr. Haccombe could not repress within common bounds the interest he took in Miss Lamorne's ignorance of what she was to see. Mrs. Barnby too loaded her with kind expressions, while Sir Edward went into his corner, and seemed

seemed either asleep or too much abstracted to know what was the subject of their conversation.

Mrs. Haccombe's places were called for: the box door opened, and Peregrina had an oblique view of the stage and a full one of the company on the opposite side of the house. She thought the world could not afford another spectacle so charming, and she halted, with admiration, till Mrs. Barnby, who had politely put her first, reminded her that she was to go forward. When she could turn her attention to the stage, she was very sorry to find the second act begun. Mr. Haccombe had placed himself behind her; and in a low voice was every moment endeavouring to extort her expressions of admiration, but the interest of the play soon fixed her, and, excepting between the acts, she had no more leisure for gazing.

But

But she found her enjoyment of a very different kind from that she had felt on entering: her heart, naturally prone to genuine pity, sunk under the scenic distress; and the glistening tears, which one moment trembled on her cheeks and the next fell on her lap, were inadequate to discharge its emotions. As the distress heightened, her affliction increased; and when the catastrophe was before her eyes, untaught by fashion how to express or how to disguise her feelings; in all the native language of her simplicity she turned to Mrs. Barnby, and throwing her arms round her neck for support, she cried out audibly;—"Oh! it is too much!—I see *my* father die again,"—and fell into strong hysterics.

The company in the boxes were alarmed, and many stood up to see what had happened. Mrs. Barnby, never endued with much presence of mind, was as unaiding as an infant; Mr. Haccombe, in
trepid-

trepidation, fidgetted on all sides as if hunting for her relief; while Sir Edward, who had sat mute and motionless the whole evening, with one hand opened the box-door, with the other made a sign to a gentleman near him, and in less than two minutes with his assistance conveyed her to one of the waiting-rooms, the rest of the party following. She was there soon recovered; and Sir Edward calling out in his usual style, in answer to Mr. Haccombe's tender enquiries,—“Why, old dad, who but you would have brought a miss for the first time to see old Lear go mad?”—quitted them, childishly earnest, lest he should miss the beginning of the farce.

Peregrina, notwithstanding the weakness she felt from her disturbed spirits, was unwilling to lose the remainder of her pleasure; and Mrs. Barnby, not very unwisely, suggesting that a diverting farce might raise her again to cheerfulness, they

re-

returned and sat out the entertainment, not however perfectly to the satisfaction of Peregrina, who was hurt by the general attention her indisposition had attracted towards her.

Before the curtain dropped, Sir Edward signified his intention to be gone; and nothing could prevail on his crazy impatience to wait for his company. They reached home only a few seconds before him, and found Mrs. Haccombe sitting by the drawing-room fire with a book on the table by her, which, by being turned down and its face open, declared how well she had been employed. Sir Edward, who nearly overtook the party at the drawing-room door, sprang towards the table, and seized the book, as if very curious to discover what was Mrs. Haccombe's subject of study. He interrupted the enquiries she was going to make, by a loud laugh, crying out, "Why ods-life, dear mamma, you are very clever, you read your books with-

without their being cut open—pray, now do tell me, how do you get a peep at a duodecimo page.” Mrs. Haccombe who really was not aware of the circumstance, and who had snatched the first book she laid her hand on to make a shew with, was about to contradict him; but it was a truth not to be denied; and she looked a little silly, while he triumphed most provokingly, placing the book open on his head, and crying out repeatedly, and in the tone of a show-man; “Who will read my pretty book? I will shew you a wonderful pretty book—my mamma’s own, very own book”—Mrs. Haccombe endeavoured to raise her voice above his, and prudently she did so; for it was her interest to prevent any enquiry that should have discovered how very lately her friend the peer had taken his leave.

Accustomed as the family were to the noise and nonsense of their insane inmate, what he now vociferated was little attended to;

to; and he ceased, as soon as Mrs. Hacombe had asked what the play was, to answer her, by saying, in contradiction to the rest of the company, that the play was the *Careless Husband*! Every one attempted to assist his memory; but he seemed convinced he was right; and *Peregrina* was more shocked at this instance of derangement than at any she had yet witnessed. He was at last suffered to enjoy his error; and he began commenting on the characters of *Sir Charles Easy*, *Lord Foppington*, &c. then breaking out, as if with new absurdity, he declared the scene between *Lord Foppington* and *Polonius* inimitable: he then talked of *Ophelia* and *Miranda*, which shewed his ideas to have wandered still farther: he spoke with asperity, that seemed to have a meaning, of the *Queen in Hamlet*; and ended by launching out in praise of the excellence he had really witnessed in the performance of *Cordelia*. He then ordered his man to attend him to his chamber; and, without staying

staying supper with the family, withdrew for the night, leaving Mrs. Haccombe very well pleased at his departure, Mr. Haccombe fretted at his oddity, Mrs. Barnby very pensive, and Peregrina in doubt how she could endure living in the same house with one so terribly unfit for society.

She went to bed, with a resolution that nothing should prevent her rising early in the morning, to keep up by practice those accomplishments on which she knew she must, at one time or other, and how she knew not, depend wholly for support. The inroad she had made on her slender purse, distressed her in the recollection; and she made a secret vow, that no fancied necessity should seduce her into a competition with persons in a station of life so far above that she must look on as her's. An unquiet sleep, in which she fancied herself exposed to real danger from Sir Edward's derangement, succeeded to her

Vol. II.

M

mortify-

mortifying reflections: she slept again late in the morning, and in her way down stairs, met a message from Mr. Haccombe requesting to see her on business in the library.

Thither she immediately went; and found a reception that dissipated every chagrin from a mind not yet taught to suspect. He took her hand as she entered, and with a look that she construed into the most flattering benignity, he enquired after her health, and expressed his concern for his own want of thought which had the preceding evening so severely tried her feelings. He then with much circumlocution and abundance of *stocking-stroking*, congratulated himself on the pleasure of having her in his family, hoped she would not for a long time think of any other situation, and at last came to the point on which he had requested the interview, namely that of enquiring, with the most fatherly regard, and in the most delicate mode

mode of interrogation, how stood her finances.

Peregrina scarcely knew what to answer: she was ashamed to own how poorly she was equipped for her *débüt* in London; and she just knew enough of the world to perceive that such a confession would have an appearance her spirit would be hurt at: she therefore hesitated, and thus gave Mr. Haccombe the answer he wished for. He told her, with an air of encouraging frankness, that he well knew young persons, brought up by the great, were not often as much considered as they should be, in the article of expence—that he understood from Mrs. Haccombe, that Lady Jemima Byram claimed no other right over her than that which friendship and protection gave her; and he supposed, that as it was her wish that she should seek a situation of emolument, her ladyship had not provided her for a winter's amusement in London,

M 2

which

which he hoped she would not scruple to accept from him. He then, with all the politeness and grace his artificial manners and awkward person could command, presented her with a draft on his banker for fifty pounds, and begged that, as often as she wished this trifle renewed, she would do him the honor only to make the application *in person*.

The inexperienced girl, who saw only the merit of the action, burst into tears of gratitude, as she accepted this unsuspected generosity, and in a voice just audible, thanked Heaven that, when most she needed protection, had sent her such friends as those she was now with. Mr. Hacombe then entered into a conversation with her, the drift of which was, could she but have seen it, to find out who was likely to call him to account, should he in due time open more fully his intention. Here Peregrina was on her guard in one particular, but unfortunately in that
which

which it was least her interest to be punctilious in. To Mr. Haccombe's enquiries respecting her connexions, she answered in a way that led him to suppose her, as Lady Jemima had represented her, a young person whom she had voluntarily educated. She spoke of herself as an orphan who never knew a mother's care, and was kept in ignorance who was her other parent: She could name no friend but Lady Jemima; and from *her* friendship Mr. Haccombe, by this time, pretty well knew little danger to his schemes was to be apprehended.

The hour of breakfast broke off the conversation: dressing for Kensington-gardens, in company with *charming* Mrs. Barnby and wearisome Sir Edward, destroyed the morning and noon—a third dressing, a late dinner, an immense rout in the evening, at which Mrs. Haccombe displayed all her sublimities, and a *petit souper*, at which Lord Surcheester assisted
and

and the business of the contract was whispered over as if going on well, completed the murder of the second day; and Peregrina began to perceive that the London day divided itself almost naturally into the varieties of pleasure and fatigue.

CHAP.

CHAP. XIX.

THUS became this daughter of affliction initiated into polite life ; and by degrees she grew as fond of it, and as unfit for any other, as the rest of the dissipated world. She had, to her very great surprise, received from Dublin a number of packages she did not expect ; these were the accoutrements her kind friend lady Jemima had designed to fit her out for sale with. Mrs. Haccombe, who in proportion as her own situation with lord Surcheſter became more arranged, increased her attention towards Peregrina, explained the mystery of these valuable presents, not much to lady Jemima's credit ; and seemed more than ever delighted with the disappointment of her ladyship's scheme. The fine cloaths were laid by till a fit season for making use of them ; and Peregrina, to her infinite satisfaction, found that even
this

this little circumstance served to draw her into a closer contact with her new and inestimable friends, every one of whom seemed to consider her as their peculiar *protégée*;—for Mr. Haccombe escorted her in public; and if he did not always accompany her in her visits to newly-formed connexions, uniformly gave her the use of his carriage. Mrs. Haccombe, when otherwise engaged herself, always recommended her to her husband's care; and *sweet* Mrs. Barnby smoothed all difficulties, talked away all scruples, flattered, encouraged, and idolized, till Peregrina scarcely knew what her original opinions had been. Still, however, respect for Mr. Byram's memory, which she conceived her unallowed claim might injure, and fear of Sir Clifford, kept her from communicating any one of those circumstances which lady Jemima had so artfully recommended to her concealment.

Mr.

Mr. Haccombe, whose eyes were soon blinded towards his wife's conduct, by his fixed attention on Peregrina, and by lord Surcheſter's obtaining for him the promiſed contract, loſt no opportunity of increaſing his influence over the mind of his young charge ; but he ſoon found that the hopes he had conceived from the avidity with which ſhe ſwallowed the bait of pleaſure, would be diſappointed, ſhould he expect from her any other ſpecies of gratitude, than that which his boated parental affection claimed. All the little ſhallow art, with which, in his many converſations with her, he tried to ſhake her prejudices by informing her how *the world* thought and acted, had no other effect than that of obtaining from her, reiterated proteſtations, the ſincerity of which he could not doubt, from her native ingenuousneſs, that rather than conform to the practice of the world, where her heart taught her that practice was corrupt, ſhe would renounce it and all its deluſions at

once.—She seemed to refer all her moral actions here, to an hereafter Mr. Hacombe had not lately cared about; and a strange notion she entertained, that things were only good or bad as they would appear at that test, was too strong for all his French metaphysics, and half-learnt materialism. When he quoted Voltaire and D'Alembert, poor Peregrina had no better arguments to answer with, than those the sermon on the mount and St. Paul's old-fashioned epistles furnished her with; for Peregrina had not studied controversy, nor knew that it was necessary for a christian to be armed against the subtlety and malice of a christian.

Perceiving nothing was to be gained by the common means; and being too prudent to risque his character by any violent use of the rights of protectorship, he wisely endeavoured to conquer his passion, which he found growing rather more se-

rious than he had intended; but he had been so little used to conquests of this kind, that the business was awkward, especially whilst every day produced him a new impediment in some new charm the not-yet perfect beauty of Miss Lamorne discovered. He therefore changed at once his plan and his opinions, and resolved, since he could not get the better of his passion, to give it, under due regulation, its way; and conjecturing from the frequent disappointments Mrs. Haccombe's *indisposition* proved to her partaking the family engagements, that her life was not a very good one, he persuaded himself she had death in her countenance, and he nominated Peregrina Lamorne as her successor, reckless of what the world might say or think.

Mrs. Barnby was at the same time Mrs. Haccombe's *confidante*, and as a dutiful niece, a zealous promoter of all her uncle's

uncle's views: her business was to steer nicely between Scylla and Charybdis, and to serve herself by keeping such a hold on Peregrina's affection, as should prevent her ever presuming to cast a thought towards Sir Edward Bergholt, whose recovery she seemed daily to expect; but of this encroachment on her prior rights she had no cause to be afraid; for though Peregrina could not but infer from what he now and then was, that, had Sir Edward been of sane mind, he might have been very agreeable, she had conceived such a horror of his infirmity, and it was at some times so terrifying, and at others so tiresome, that she most cordially wished him out of the house.

But delighted as she was with the splendor she lived in, and with the entertainments and gay society of the town, it was an unpleasant reflection to Peregrina, that all, which with so much earnestness she

she had been taught, and with so much application had learned, was now becoming a mere wreck. She had no time for any thing but pleasure; and in pleasure she was forced to sink those painful remembrances which she fancied she had no other means of discarding.

CHAP.

CHAP. XX.

IN the multitudes that visited at Mrs. Hacombe's, and who formed her routs, attended her concerts, and graced her balls, there was, as now in all large circles of dissipation, a motley mixture of all sorts; and persons, who some years ago would never have been seen or named together, were sociable, if not intimate. And so it must be wherever vanity is to be gratified only by numbers; for that which is extensive can never be select. At Mrs. Hacombe's, the faulty peers never was denied admission: at any rate her title was an honor, and her ticket was an embellishment to the frame of a pier glass, or the more elegant card-rack. Such ladies formed Mrs. Hacombe's second class of idols: those who had elevated rank and unblemished character, and an unencumbered fortune, stood first, but were few in number,

ber, and were such as by civilities, similar to those she had exhibited lately at Bath, she had bound to take notice of her in London. The throng of commoners included all who, whether with the means or without them, had spirit enough to make a figure. For the retired decencies of life, Mrs. Haccombe confessed she had no taste.

Amongst the most respectable of this assemblage was the widow Countess of Cottisbrooke, a woman of very estimable understanding and character. She had been left, early in life, sole parent of two sons and a daughter, whose education she had attended to with the most truly maternal sedulity. Her eldest son, now in his twentieth year, was on his travels: her second son, Hamilton Courtland, was in the army; and her daughter lady Essex, who had just attained her seventeenth year, was still under her care. She had also under her guardianship a right honourable

nourable heiress, lady Almerina Delaford, who, the last of a good family, had been left with a very slender fortune to mend it by marriage or by a pension. She had been educated at a fashionable boarding school, from which on her mother's death, about two years before, lady Cottisbrooke, disliking the high tone the young lady had assumed, by living chiefly with her inferiors in rank, had removed her to her own house; and the present earl having shewn, immediately on seeing her, how much he was captivated by her person, the consideration of money which he did not want had been thrown aside; and the young couple were engaged to marry on his lordship's return.

This respectable woman had, from her first interview with Peregrina, conceived an affection for her, and was one of those who most distinguished her by invitations to her house, and familiar notice in public. She seemed to wish for an intimacy
between

between her daughter lady Effex and Miss Lamorne; but intimacy here could never produce friendship; for the young lady was very little removed from idioey: at least she was, at seventeen, what she might have been at six; and all attempts to strengthen her powers, or to fasten instruction on her mind, had hitherto proved fruitless.

Lady Almerina Delaford, who traced a pedigree from the conquest, and wisely judged that did she not maintain her importance herself, it must now in its old age decline, and yield to honors more flourishing as better nourished, disdained to follow the example of her guardian, whom in her heart she despised, and whom her tongue not unfrequently vilified with the opprobrium of folly and weakness. In all things where her mother's superior authority did not restrain her, lady Effex was governed by the more imposing dogma of lady Almerina; and lady Cottis-
brooke

brooke had more than once seen cause to repeat that strictness of conscience which had made her take under her fostering wing one who was almost uniformly an obstacle to her best intentions.

In Peregrina Lamorne she thought she saw a counterbalance to this inconvenience; and having learnt from the still-ingenuous girl, that however flattering her situation with Mrs. Haccombe was, it was neither a natural one nor a permanent one, lady Cottisbrooke cast about for the means to draw her into her own family; and at a ball at lady Kerbell's, mentioned her wish to Peregrina, who, with a sigh, recollecting that she *ought* to get her living, referred her ladyship to Mrs. Haccombe.

Lady Cottisbrooke called the next morning; and being introduced to the drawing-room, she found there only Mr. Haccombe, who was in truth waiting in hopes of catching five minutes' conversation with
Peregrina

Peregrina before she went out. Her ladyship without scruple opened her intention to him, by saying that she understood from Miss Lamorne, that her situation was but temporary, and that it was her intention to engage herself as governess or companion in a respectable family. Mr. Haccombe, cool, artful, and whenever the world was his witness, master of himself, replied with many acknowledgments of her ladyship's goodness, but assured her that, however humbly Miss Lamorne might think of herself, and diffidently of the steadiness of her friends, it was not his or Mrs. Haccombe's design ever to part from her—they had adopted her as a daughter; and they should ever regard her as such. Lady Cottisbrooke, mortified at her disappointment, staid only to hear Mrs. Haccombe, with a profusion of adulatory nothings, confirm her husband's account, and then withdrew.

CHAP. XXI.

FAR different from the species of regard lady Cottisbrooke honored Peregrina with, was the treatment she received from the Countess of Kerbell, and her daughters lady Grace and lady Susan Moray. Lord Kerbell was obliged to live abroad; and her ladyship was sent over to try to put off, by way of marriage, their hopeful offspring, who had been educated in France for the purpose. This was the third season of trial; and an exhibition of daughters being a matter rather more expensive than the very slender finances of the house of Moray could bear often repeated, the earl, who had been a libertine, and was sunk into a savage, had declared, with his usual firmness of tone and manner, it should be the last winter he would pay for trumpery for his *mauxes*, who being now, in spite of their skill in the *fine arts*,
on

on the untoward side of thirty, were rendered almost desperate.

Lady Grace had fixed her attentions on Sir Edward Bergholt, whose unfortunate state of mind seemed to bring him within her reach; and Lady Susan was not without views in the same quarter, till, through their common friend, Mrs. Hacombe, she became acquainted with the Courtland family. Lady Almerina Delaford took care that no lady should break her heart in ignorance, for Lord Cottisbrooke's sake; for all within the circle of her acquaintance knew him for her betrothed; but Hamilton Courtland, though to be sure a younger brother, and with a fortune to make, was no despicable conquest; and Lady Susan, by that mode of behaviour which teaches a young man to be ashamed of being behindhand, flattered herself she had secured him.

In

In the frequent meetings of the several parties of fashion, Lord Surcheſter had not eſcaped the flirtations of theſe jocund nymphs; but their prudent mother was here cautious. She knew the earl's character; and ſhe was convinced that his regards could never tend to the *eſtabliſhment* of her daughters: ſhe therefore kept him at a due diſtance; and he having other engagements on his hands, did not much thwart her maternal care.

The beauty, the inborn elegance, the ſoft manners, and the happy gift of univerſally pleaſing, which graced Peregrina Lamorne, had, early in her introduction to the world, given great offence to Lady Kerbell, who, with the taſk before her, of marrying her daughters, and the diſmal option of returning to their eagle-inhabited caſtle in Caithneſs, ſaw, with envy and the moſt rancorous ſpite, all her arts caſt far behind, by the ſimple attractions of a mean dependent—a creature of no note—whose
family

family no one could or was curious to trace, who appeared to have been educated in privacy, and now wanted whatever she had acquired for her daughters, that is, the manners of the world, and the air of *ton*. Ten thousand circumstances shewed Peregrina's ignorance of high life;—she blushed when spoken to;—she was embarrassed when stared at:—she often stopped short when speaking, if attentively listened to;—she never disguised her thoughts;—she did not praise universally; she could not flatter; and yet, horrible to think on!—Peregrina, the poor dependent of the Haccombes, was noticed,---was attended to, when the lady Morays were neglected---she was admired by such as could praise---she was literally growing the fashion;---and the young men buzzed round her.

—It was not to be expected that the young ladies should have more charity than their mamma. Lady Grace and lady Susan

Susan were restrained from invective, only by the contemptuous reception a few of their first efforts had met with; for the tide of opinion was against them, and they found they should be singular in opposing it; but whatever personal mortifications, neglects, or rudenesses they could bestow on this unoffending enemy, she was sure to receive at their hands. Their conversation uniformly expressed their disdain of all beneath them: they affected to talk in a jargon peculiar to the great, and never failed glancing obliquely, if they did not rail openly, at whatever distinguished *that Miss Lamorne*, the style by which she was always mentioned by the mother and daughters, in their private cabal.

It happened one evening, when Mrs. Haccombe was to fill her rooms with one of her largest assemblies, that Miss Lamorne, from a cold got at the Opera, was too ill to dress fitly for the occasion; but

Mr. Haccombe, ever earnest for her being seen, could not dispense with her appearing; and Mrs. Barnby promising to make a due apology for her, she consented to be in the drawing-room. Though not vain of her beauty, and attributing much of what was said to her to the fashion, which she saw procured flattery where there were no pretensions, she was never negligent of her looks; and though permitted by the kindness of her friends to consult her health alone, she was hurt at the idea of looking, as in her playful vivacity she termed it, *like an owl*. She therefore, trusting to her own genius, designed and executed a species of head-dress, which, while it secured her from cold, was highly ornamental, and the greatest embellishment of her beauty she had yet appeared with—it was simply Grecian; an ostrich feather rendered it dressy, and a few elegant trinkets about her throat and neck, took off all appearance of necessity.

But when dressed, and in her place, before the arrival of any other company than a few ladies who had dined *en famille*, she was mortified by attracting the particular notice of Sir Edward, who in one of his most troublesome fits, left the bottle and the gentlemen, and made her listen while he told in the most incoherent, unintelligible manner, one of the supernatural stories of the Germans. He was deep in the legend of *Number-nip*, which he had just been reading, when Mr. Haccombe, who had staid away as long as he could endure absence from Peregrina, brought with him Lord Surcheſter and the rest of the small dinner party. Mrs. Haccombe drew her friendly peer to a window, but could not keep his eyes from wandering towards Miss Lamorne. Other company presently came in; and things returned to their usual course.

Amongst some of the first, were Lady Kerbell and the Lady Morays, who just
paying

paying their due attention to the mistress of the house, and chatting a little with Mrs. Barnby, passed Peregrina without any other notice than a scowl, which Lady Kerbell gave, to see what impediment she had brushed against.—Peregrina, not aware that an affront was designed, curtseyed; but the countess's northern joints could not bend in return, and having seated herself at a card-table, and made due use of her opera-glass, she left her daughters to manage the family interests.

The young ladies never played cards--- they were expensive things, and confining them to a spot, gave less scope to their powers. They therefore roved about, never omitting the adjustment of their persons, as they passed the splendid mirrors. Lady Grace at last caught mad Sir Edward, who had hitherto remained near Miss Lamorne, making the most ridiculous observations on those who entered. He was now placed between the Scots

belles in a distant corner; and their gestures, looks, and loud laughing, declared that Peregrina was not only the subject of their conversation, but the object of their ridicule, because she had the effrontery to appear to advantage in a head-dress not strictly in the fashion.

After about ten minutes' sport of this kind; and when the distress it occasioned the victim of their mirth was a little abated, by a circle that had formed round her, Sir Edward, whom they seemed to be urging forward, crossed the room to Miss Lamorne, and with his privileged oddity staring full in her face, put this blunt question to her. "Pray, you Miss, are you painted?"—The ladies near her would have driven him away, but he would not depart without an answer, which, to their great surprise, Miss Lamorne gave in the affirmative! and without the least discomposure! He stretched out his hands with a deep Oh! The Lady Morays exulting cried,

cried, "Now, Edward, your guineas--- you have lost your wager!" How the matter terminated in that corner, Peregrina did not observe; for her attention was called on by a Mrs. Hammond, a little fairy kind of woman with flaxen hair, fine eyes, a *well-made* complexion, which hid bad features, and a studied manner, which hid a bad heart. Speaking with her teeth shut, that their irregularity might be less observed, and trundling every rough consonant on her tongue to shew the clearness of her articulation; she expressed her astonishment, not that Miss Lamorne used art to heighten her beauty, but that she should *confess* it. "Why really," said Peregrina, "I see no reason for disguising it.---I have done no harm, and why should I deny it?---When I was dressed to day, Mrs. Barnby thought I looked pale. She desired me to give myself a little more colour, and offered me what she uses; but I did not think it would suit my complexion---it is too orange for me---so I
got

got some of the water-colours I use for painting flowers, and I put a little on each cheek. I asked Mr. and Mrs. Haccombe first, and they had no objection; and indeed I think I look the better for it. I see no more impropriety in it than in changing the colour of my hair by powder, if those I live with like it; but I should be very much ashamed of it, if I did it to deceive. I have asked all my particular acquaintance how they like me in it."

The party round her now mingling with others of their acquaintance, Peregrina was able to see the Lady Morays, whom Sir Edward had left, and who had now between them Hamilton Courtland, newly come in. Him too they seemed egging on to some folly; and he presently, with ingenuous modesty and a very proper reluctance in his countenance, came up to Miss Lamorne, with whom he was *diffidently* acquainted, and requesting her forgiveness of the rudeness imposed on him, begged in
the

the name of the Lady Morays, to know who was her milliner. With great presence of mind, perceiving now the drift of the young ladies' wit, she told him his apology was unnecessary, when he said whom he came from, and begged him to answer for her to the young ladies, that in this instance herself was her milliner.--- Hamilton coloured deeper than before, bowed, sighed, and retired.

The adjustment of a *vingt-un* table in another room, drew Peregrina thither; and in a farther room, where was at present no company, she perceived Sir Edward walking backwards and forwards very soberly, but in deep thought. She took no notice of it. The table was formed; and she herself declining to risque her money at a game so very precarious, sat out near three young ladies with whom she was not very intimately acquainted.

These

These were the Miss Affingtons, heiresses of a banker, with immense fortunes. They had witnessed the conduct of the Lady Morays, who with Lady Kerbell, had just passed through the room to attend another party; and who, as they brushed by Peregrina, aloud expressed their hope, that they should meet no *low* people where they were going. A deportment so far beyond what even the license of unlimited fashion allows, drew on them the general attention and general censure. Sir Edward, hearing his name mentioned, came forward and joined in the conversation with the Miss Affingtons and several others, who did not mean quite so well as they did, but whom their importance awed into concurrence.

Miss Harriet Affington, the second of these sisters, asked him how he could be the bearer of so foolish a message. He replied, that he had just as much curiosity as Lady Grace Moray. He was asked
what

what he had gained by his curiosity. He answered, that he had got a great deal; for that he had found out, that Miss Lammorne was as great a fool as other people. Harriet, more provoked at his bluntness than Peregrina, took up her cause; and though he seemed in one of his most rational moods, she, by her arguments, brought him to confess, that however to be reprobated the odious and nauseous practice of enamelling and face-daubing certainly is, yet that a young woman whom indisposition had robbed of her healthy looks might, without a consignment to the infernal regions, lay a shade of innoxious pink upon her cheek, and that as she meant it as no deception, it was not criminal. Neither of the Miss Affingtons, nor even Peregrina herself, attempted to defend it as the act of wisdom. Sir Edward, to all appearance at that moment perfectly reasonable, owned *himself* convinced, but his *prejudices* still as strong as ever; and Peregrina completely mortified, and feeling

ing that in his lucid intervals his good sense had an irresistible influence over her, with the tears starting in her eyes, declared, that as it was the first time of her ever adopting the foolish practice, it should be the last. Her new friends could not shake her resolution; the moral sense was hurt, and she was inflexible: Sir Edward was silent and withdrew to join the nearest company in all the nonsense of his insanity.

Miss Affington, heartily provoked at the Lady Morays, whose tongues perhaps she thought their narrow fortunes should have restrained, proposed to her sisters, as a means of humbling their insolence, that at a ball which Lady Cottisbrooke meant to give the ensuing week on Lady Almerina's coming of age, they and all their friends and connexions, as far as they could influence them, should adopt the fashion of Miss Lamorne's new turban. The measure was coincided in; and all the young people
who

who were to be of the party and were then present, agreed to it: Mrs. Hammond amongst the rest, though not entirely to her own satisfaction; for she was little, and so ambitious of being tall, that let waists be at what medium they would, the pinnacle of her head-dress was ever disproportionately far from the centre of her figure.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXII.

Miss Lamorne had now spent six weeks in Devonshire place, in a round of giddy amusement, that far from affording her opportunity for improving what she had acquired, left her scarcely a moment to think; for the fatigue of the day made rest absolutely necessary whenever she could get it, and immediate sleep bore her to the regions of fancy as soon as her wearied limbs were stretched on her bed. She had passed the time, though thoughtlessly, innocently, led by the customs of a place she was unused to, and following the example of those into whose society she had been, so much to her own satisfaction, thrown. She had, as yet, seen no cause to suspect or even distrust any one of the family; for all still had their original points to carry: Mr. Haccombe still kept up his character of vice-parent, and as such

such made her costly presents, which had always the sanction of his lady's approbation, who was pleased to see his passion proceeding in a way that she not only trusted would afford her good ground for recrimination, should she ever be driven to extremities, but effectually prevent what she could not but sometimes fear, lord Surchester's discovery, that Miss Lamorne was a charming woman.

But Mrs. Haccombe most woefully deceived herself. Peregrina's conduct and conversation every day diminishing Mr. Haccombe's first hopes, strengthened his subsequent resolution; and he longed for nothing so ardently as the death of his wife, to whom he was nevertheless civil, for Peregrina's sake. To procure a larger sum of money from her uncle than she was wont to ask, though custom had pretty well blunted her nice feelings on this head, Mrs. Barnby had sold him a little information, not much calculated for a husband's

band's quiet in general : it respected the intimacy, now grown very observable, between lord Surcheſter and Mrs. Haccombe; and the nabob, whoſe ſenſes could not but convince him, that his lady was in no immediate danger of dying, began to flatter himſelf with the nearer proſpect of procuring a divorce: to prevent recrimination, he now grew more cautious in his behaviour to Peregrina, and conferred moſt of his favors on her through the medium of his wife.

The means this righteous party had adopted to circumvent each other, proved the deſtruction of all their private plans; for lord Surcheſter's conſtant acceſs to the houſe on the ſcore of his exertions for Mr. Haccombe, and the jealousy his lordſhip could not but ſee his loving hoſteſs entertained of Peregrina, encouraged and ſtimulated the good will he had firſt borne her into a paſſion that made him reſolve to protract his preſent amour no longer than

than till he could secure a sufficient interest in Miss Lamorne's heart. He did not suppose her at all more difficult of access than the many he had added to his triumphs: he was confident his splendid situation must dazzle her—it was easy to put her out of conceit with that she at present held at the pleasure of persons whose true character it was abundantly in his power to unveil to her; and at worst he knew the stale joke of a promise of marriage, which nothing could oblige him to fulfil, would answer all purposes.

As his success depended entirely on his caution, he redoubled his assiduities to Mrs. Haccombe, and perceiving how implicitly Peregrina was governed by Mrs. Barnby, he began to pay her attention, which he soon saw would effectually hoodwink her, by intoxicating her vanity; and towards Peregrina herself, his conduct was such a master-piece of cunning, that, excepting when he had drank more freely than

than usual, he now seldom paid her even the respect due to her. Mr. Haccombe thus grew vigilant, but in the wrong quarter. Mrs. Haccombe's jealousy went to sleep just when it should have been most awake. Mrs. Barnby, as soon as she had betrayed her aunt to her uncle, imagined herself mistaken when she had the best ground for being confident, and Peregrina fancied the family most kind when they were most cruel, and lord Surcheester most negligent towards her when she alone occupied his thoughts.---There was a still greater mistake in which they all joined---but that let time develope; for this is the

END OF THE SECOND VOLUME.

6 MA 50

